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The Week

BOTH from Washington and New York come reports of a proposed plan for settling the British war-debt question, which is evidently receiving serious consideration. It is essentially the same plan we outlined some weeks ago in our pages, based, as we then said, upon the German reparations settlement achieved at Lausanne. It is proposed that the British debt of something over four billions shall be reduced to a lump-sum payment which would, perhaps, be somewhere between five hundred and a thousand millions. This amount would be raised by floating a twenty or thirty-year bond issue in the United States, perhaps with a proviso that if these bonds could not be floated, the debt would be canceled outright. If the issue succeeded, the money would be used either to balance next year's budget or to refinance farm mortgages—both of these purposes having, of course, a powerful political appeal in the Middle West, where anti-cancellation sentiment is strongest. It would be part of the plan that England would return to the gold-exchange standard, not at the previous parity, but with the pound at perhaps $3.30 or $3.40. An American consortium of bankers, it is said, would make a large gold loan to Great Britain for the purpose of ensuring that the country would not be forced off gold again. Nothing has been said about our other European debtors, but presumably a similar plan might be set up for at least some of them.

THIS is an ingenious scheme; whether it is politically possible still remains obscure. It may be taken for granted that New York and London bankers have decided it would be acceptable to them; but there remains the British Parliament and, particularly, the American Senate. Would the British, who have been led to hope that complete cancellation is possible, accept a plan whereby they would have to send to America, as interest and amortization on the bond issue, fifty or sixty million dollars annually? Would the American Congress accept a plan which reduced the British debt to one-fifth or one-sixth of its present supposed value? It must be remembered that there is in Great Britain a large and vocal school which demands flat repudiation. Its supporters point to France, which defaulted in December without any visible harm being done, as yet, to her public or private international credit. The members of this school insist that since America by her tariff policy makes it impossible for Great Britain to pay, no odium will in the long run attach to a policy based on recognition of that fact. In the forthcoming debt negotiations, it is now clear that Mr. Roosevelt will have a narrower margin of action than is generally supposed.

THE "lame duck" Amendment to the Constitution has now been ratified by the necessary thirty-six states. Henceforth, Congress will meet every year at the beginning of January, and all members elected the previous November will take their seats at that time. The new President will be inaugurated on the twentieth of the January following his election, six weeks earlier than at present. The most interesting thing about the ratification of the new amendment is the remarkable speed with which it has been carried out, in only a few months. For many years, Senator George W. Norris, the father of this measure, introduced it in the Senate in vain. Some-

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times the Senate rejected it; on several occasions it was passed by the upper house only to be killed in the lower. Here is one case where the sentiment of the public as reflected in the state legislatures, was obviously far ahead of the sentiment reflected in Congress. How many others are there?

THE last week-end must have been a high spot in the career of George W. Norris, veteran United States Senator from Nebraska. Senator Norris, who a few years ago was on the point of resigning from the Senate because he felt so keenly the futility of public life, within a few days' time saw two of his most cherished projects move toward realization. His "lame duck" Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, and President-elect Roosevelt promised that he would support the Norris proposal for government operation of Muscle Shoals. Since this project has twice been approved by Congress, only to be vetoed successively by Messrs. Coolidge and Hoover, there seems little doubt that it can again be passed. The New Republic, which has fought for fifteen years on behalf of this project, rejoices in the outcome and felicitates Mr. Norris on what we think will prove to be one of the greatest services performed by any political figure of his generation.

THE project of the Roosevelt administration for dealing with farm mortgages, though it probably will not be passed by the present session of Congress and is still in its formative stages, is likely to have an importance which at present is little understood. It is, in essence, a scheme for wholesale, prompt and orderly reduction of the interest rate. Such reduction is now believed by many to be inevitable, but in the ordinary course of affairs it comes only after immense hardship and long bickering, which puts off any possibility of revival. The plan is likely to provide that no farm mortgage may be foreclosed until the debtor and creditor have laid their dispute before a conciliation body appointed, in each district, by the federal judges of that district. This is a probably constitutional substitute for the more drastic and probably unconstitutional proposal of a general moratorium. At the same time it facilitates reducing the debt burden to one which the debtor can bear. Another possible provision of the plan is that mortgages which have reached the foreclosure stage will be taken over by some federal credit agency like the Federal Land Banks, at a lower rate of interest. Most mortgage holders would exchange for a good bond the risk involved in taking over farm land. At the same time, farmers would have this avenue for reducing their debt charges. Once mortgage money at lower rates became available in any quantity, a general reduction of rates would be inevitable. The government would not have to refinance a large portion of the mortgages to hasten the general movement.

TIME brings its ironic changes. In 1898, and for years before that, Americans were horrified by, and protested against, the cruel treatment meted out to the Cubans by their Spanish masters. Today, Spain is protesting against the assassination of her citizens by agents of a bloody Cuban tyrant who retains his place only through the acquiescence of the United States. Spain, since our war with her, has overthrown a decadent royalist government; while in the same period the United States has so far altered its character that the news of the most horrible torture inflicted upon Cubans whose only crime is a love of liberty, is met here for the most part with a shrug of the shoulders.—Which is something to think about.

OF All the Social Democratic governments which have emerged from the European revolutions of the last fifteen years, the present Spanish regime is apparently the strongest. The Kerensky government in Russia never had more than the semblance of power; the Ebert government in Germany had power without the will to hold it. Premier Manuel Azaña is fortunate in being able to depend on the support of two powerful elements in the Spanish state. Against his enemies on the Left, the Anarcho-Syndicalists, he can use the Civil Guard, a highly trained police force which, as was shown two weeks ago, is ready to suppress peasant and proletarian revolts without mercy. Against his enemies on the Right, the monarchists and conservative republicans, he can mobilize the Socialist labor unions, which have been growing rapidly in numbers and influence. The Agrarian Workers' Association, for example, was started by the Socialists in 1930 with 30,000 dues-paying members; today it has 400,000. Out of 900 strikes large and small, the Socialist unions have received favorable verdicts in all but 75; and they are grateful for the coöperation of the present Ministry of Labor. But the support granted the present government is stronger than it is dependable. The Civil Guard is still conservative in sympathies and could not be trusted in case of a conservative revolt. The Socialist unions, on the other hand, are likely to become too radical for the government just as soon as it ceases to meet their demands. The peasants are more and more dissatisfied: where is the land they were promised? The financial outlook grows blacker. One cannot prophesy the future, but it is safe to say that the present situation is dynamic rather than static: Spain will not continue for long on its present course. The government might be overthrown from the Left or the Right, or, while continuing to hold power, it might become more and more conservative. There is one thing that is unlikely to happen. History gives few examples of governments which voluntarily turned to the Left while still in office.

A NEGRO Communist, Angelo Herndon, has just been given a sentence of eighteen to twenty years' imprisonment, in Georgia. His crime consists in

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carrying on the ordinary activities of a Communist party organizer, and the Communist party, as everyone knows, is legal in the United States. Georgia had to go back sixty years to an unrepealed "carpet-bagger" law to find any legal basis for this monstrous sentence. Herndon will serve his term on the chain gang; and the world has lately heard a good deal about chain-gang conditions: it is unlikely that he will ever live long enough to serve such a sentence. Even a paper as conservative as The New York Herald Tribune has protested the outrageous injustice of this sentence, which goes far to prove what the Communists have long charged about capitalist-ruled courts, in the Deep South and elsewhere.

THOSE who have been waiting with bated breath to hear how Radio City is coming out are hereby informed that since the movies were introduced in the Music Hall, the two new theatres have been doing extremely well. Probably because people are curious to see the theatres themselves, they have been packed at every performance. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd, has been placed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in general charge of his father's theatrical interests, which now include the ownership of a handsome block of stock in R-K-O. Among the young man's other problems, he must wrestle with the question of what to do with the apartment which Mr. Roxy-Rothafel built for himself in Radio City. According to the usually reliable columns of Variety, this apartment cost, including decorations, $250,000. Three chefs were employed by Roxy, and were prepared to serve as many as twenty people at any meal. Three complete silver services were purchased, one for breakfast, one for lunch and one for dinner. Incidentally, the Radio City theatres are reported to be struggling under a burden of more than $300,000 of extra and unexpected expense, representing money spent by Roxy without anyone's knowledge. In fact Roxy's chief usefulness would seem to have been to teach Mr. Rockefeller the proper scale of expenditure for a multi-millionaire.

A FEW weeks ago The New Republic published an article by Morris L. Cooke of the New York Power Authority stating that we know little about distribution costs of electricity, but have good reason to suspect that charges made on this account are too high. Last week there was held in New York an Institute of Public Engineering on this subject. It was attended by more than 200 engineers, power executives and utility commissioners. A paper by Major Clayton W. Pike, consulting engineer of the New York Power Authority, demonstrated that the actual cost of distribution to private companies in New York State averaged about 2.36 cents per kilowatt hour, far below what they were charging. He also developed a formula by means of which regulatory bodies could determine distribution costs with reasonable accuracy. Major Pike's figure is to be compared with the 2.8 cents of the Seattle publicly owned plant and the 1.32 cents of the London, Ontario, company. The engineers present representing the public were of the opinion that a good start had been made, that the method of determining costs should be perfected and promptly applied in the interest of lower rates. The private engineers could argue only that the problem was vast and complicated, and that slow investigation was required. Dr. Clyde L. King, new chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Service Commission, replied that the engineers had better make haste and be "damn simple" in their explanations, because commissions were faced with the necessity of ruling on exorbitant rates and were not going to delay action for a lifetime of quibbling. It was brought out that a Supreme Court decision had affirmed the right of regulatory authorities to take into account cost-finding on distribution. It looks as if, in many states, domestic electricity rates are due for a nose-dive.

THAT remarkable exhibition of mass idiocy, the "Buy American" campaign, continues to make headway with the unreasoning mob of business men. For this we have to thank W. R. Hearst and Cyrus H. K. Curtis, both of whom have always been economic illiterates, and are showing no improvement. One rather unexpected aspect of the campaign has developed in Hollywood, where the movie studios with foreign-born stars are actually reported to be afraid to put out films made by these reprehensible immigrants. Incidentally, among the worst offenders against the new propaganda are Messrs. Hearst and Curtis, Both of them continue to fill their columns with the deplorable writings of Europeans, thus taking away the market from honest American authors. Mr. Hearst also buys millions of dollars' worth of paper in Canada. His California ranch house is stocked with several hundred thousand dollars' worth of antiques, and if any of them were made in America, Mr. Hearst was cheated by the dealers who guaranteed them to be 100-percent old mossy-mansey.

THE progressive-education movement in the United States has thus far made comparatively little direct advance in the public schools. In the private schools, especially in the Northeast, it has done better. There it has been notably successful in the kindergarten and primary grades, and moderately successful in the earlier years of the secondary schools. In the colleges, with a few honorable exceptions, it has made little headway. This fact has handicaped it in the secondary schools, as well; nearly all the graduates of the private schools in question go to college, and the four years of their high-school work are at present devoted to preparing themselves for the rigid, arbitrary entrance requirements which nearly all colleges still set up. It is true that many Western colleges have long ad-

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mitted students on certificate from certain "accredited" high schools—but unfortunately, the way a school gets on the accredited list is by giving the standard courses which the colleges regard as suitable preparation. Educators have long realized that progressive ideals could never be attained while this situation continued; and they have at last succeeded in doing something about it. A committee of the Progressive Education Association has managed to persuade a large number of the country's leading colleges to let down the bars, so far as graduates of a specified group of progressive schools are concerned. They will henceforth be admitted to these colleges under drastically modified and simplified entrance requirements. It is hoped that these students, the first of whom will enter college three years hence, will have better integrated courses of study, both in the preparatory school and at college, than are now possible, and courses better adapted to their individual needs. Although the experiment is promised for only five years after 1936, no one in touch with the situation believes it will end at that time. On the contrary, it is believed that it will become increasingly the basis of general practice in regard to college-entrance requirements.

UNDESIRABLE practices in connection with the flotation and subsequent manipulation of real-estate bonds were aired the other day in New York City. At a meeting of the Cheney Banking Commission, holding hearings for the purpose of considering possible state legislation, experts testified as to some of the practices which need to be curbed. Here are a few of them:

> In order to make possible huge loans on them, properties have often been given fictitious valuations by the simple process of paying large fees to appraisers.
>
> Banks and other institutions whose names provided good "window dressing" have allowed themselves to be listed as "trustees" when in fact their connection with the property was a purely formal one, based on the payment to them of a nominal fee.
>
> After a property is in default, a "protective committee," made up of officers of the house of issue, takes charge and directs its operations for its own benefit rather than for the benefit of the bondholders whom it claims to protect.

Among the specific recommendations advanced at the hearing are the following:

> Quarterly reports of the financial condition should be published.
>
> Trustees should be legally compelled to notify all bondholders when a property is in default regarding taxes.
>
> It should be illegal for a house of issue to withhold interest when able to pay, for the purpose of depressing its own securities and making a gambler's profit.
>
> A moderate number of bondholders should be entitled to demand action in case of a threatened default.
>
> A bondholders' committee should be given access to lists of other bondholders in the possession of the house of issue.
>
> Compulsory listing of real-estate bonds on some exchange should be required in order to provide a check upon the actions of the underwriters.

That legislation is needed to check these practices, no one can doubt who has read the various articles on this subject in The New Republic or the book "Bonds Without Safety." There is a grave question, however, whether this legislation should be inaugurated by the separate states. Action taken by several states after the G. L. Miller and Company failure in 1927 did little or nothing toward curbing the reckless real-estate financing in the three years immediately following. A number of State Securities Commissions were set up, one more innocuous than the other, settling down finally to nothing more than licensing bureaus, which bond salesmen used as "sales ammunition," since they could be referred to as an added protection to the bondholder. In the absence of federal legislation, it is painfully easy for a company engaged in dishonest practices to operate across the state lines. The first task is probably to obtain the enactment of a strong federal law, after which it will be time to seek the enactment of appropriate supplementary legislation in each of the forty-eight states.

What Banks Are For

MR. BRAY HAMMOND'S article on page 313 of this issue makes clear a few elementary reasons why change in our banking system is essential. No institution has more glaringly failed during the existing depression. The mere fact that one-third of the banks have been forced to close their doors and that over two billion dollars at a time has been tied up in deposits in these institutions is enough to show the least expert what an antiquated wreck this economic vehicle is. Other countries, almost equally depressed, have had few or no bank failures. That underlines the lesson. The chief difference between our banking system and others which have shown a higher capacity for self-preservation is that ours is still compelled by law to operate on the old principle of competition among many small units under inefficient and conflicting supervision, while others have been highly centralized and made responsible. Here, as elsewhere, the competitive principle of classical economics has broken down in practice.

Neither the bulk of the bankers nor the majority in Congress appear willing, however, to learn the first page of this lesson. The Glass banking bill, which takes a few timid steps toward fewer and better banks and a more unified system, has met bitter opposition. It does not attempt to abolish state banking, thus ending our illogical dual system. It does not even limit appreciably the

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scope of the state banks. All it does in this respect is to permit national banks to have branches outside the cities in which their headquarters are—and a Senate amendment confines this privilege to states in which state banks are allowed the same latitude. There is merely a hope that, under this provision, more banks which wish to expand will come into the national system, so that this system will not continue to suffer a competitive disadvantage.

Another important provision of the Glass bill is directed towards a different flaw in our system. It forbids banks to have affiliates which sell securities. This hits the big banks rather than the little ones. The reason for it has many times been explained. Banks which accept deposits are supposed to be chiefly concerned with guardianship of the depositors' funds. They are buyers of investments, and they ought to be careful buyers. If they have departments or affiliated companies which are in the business of selling securities on commission, and which thus have an interest in the marketing of investments, they are on both sides of the fence at once. Nobody can tell whether they are trying to safeguard the depositors or to make a profit by selling securities to themselves, to be bought with the depositors' money. Under such circumstances, they are likely to be less careful buyers.

Even if—as was distinctly not the case during the last boom—banks with security affiliates sell themselves only reasonably sound investments, still they are tempted to put too large a proportion of banking funds into long-term and speculative issues, devoting too small a proportion to short-term loans and more liquid uses. This is even more dangerous, from the point of view of the whole country, than a mere failure to safeguard depositors' money. Economists who have studied the subject are virtually unanimous in the opinion that one of the most disastrous tendencies of the late boom was the overexpansion of investment. This expansion was based largely, not on real savings, but on bank credit. It led to the creation of more productive capacity than the demands of consumers could keep permanently busy. It overloaded with capital obligations the productive capacity which was created. Loans on these securities in turn facilitated crazy stock-market speculation. When the inevitable crash came, and capital values began to shrink, the banks were left in a perilous position. They had large investments and loans on securities which could not be liquidated, or could be liquidated only at terrific loss. This toppled over the weaker banks, and so endangered all banks that they were rendered less able to make ordinary loans and supply normal credit needs. The depression was intensified and prolonged.

Why men like Huey Long, who pose as popular tribunes, should obstruct so moderate a reform as the Glass banking bill may be at first difficult to understand. He objects that it would give a monopoly of capital issues to the investment bankers proper. But surely an institution like the National City Company is just as fearsome a representative of Wall Street as J. P. Morgan and Company or Kuhn, Loeb, which specialize in floating securities but do not have affiliates which accept money on deposit or make commercial loans. Men like Senator Long are moved by a populist belief in small, local enterprise as opposed to economic centralization. In this banking controversy, they are the counterparts of those who formerly, in the interest of small business, passed the anti-trust laws, or those who now are attempting, in the interest of independent merchants, to stop the growth of chain stores. They are, of course, wrong in believing that small business and competition will serve us well, or can be preserved. Nevertheless they are supported by a well grounded popular distrust of the way big business and finance, seeking their own profit, will serve us. If it were not for this, the millions of people who have had such a disastrous experience with small, decentralized banking would rise up and overwhelm any opposition to a proposal for banking reform.

If we had only a few big banks instead of many small ones, and if those banks were members of a single system and under competent supervision, we should have gone far beyond what the Glass banking bill makes possible. In that case we should have had fewer failures, less hoarding and a less sharp credit panic than have occurred. That would have been a help. Still, however, we should be far from possessing an instrumentality for the proper regulation of credit and investment. It is by no means certain that if investment houses were separated from commercial banks, we should have less expansion of security issues based on credit. The same financial interests which conducted the stock-market boom and the real-estate boom last time would still be in charge of both types of institutions. They would still be motivated by desire for profit. The big banks and the big houses of issue would still be competing for business. There would still be no effective regulation of the total amount or of the specific uses, either of credit or of investment.

We often talk about "the banking system" as if it were a functional institution, a public utility, the business of which is to serve the economic needs of the community. We talk about employing it to expand credit in depressions and restrict credit in booms. Such talk is, under existing conditions, self-deception. We have no "banking system." We have a lot of banks owned by individuals and run for profit. The only other object sought by the managers of the banks is safety of their own property. By a complex practice of regulation we attempt to make these banks refrain from doing things which would be too dangerous for their depositors. By certain other devices we attempt to play on their profit motive to produce what is supposed to be a sound credit policy. In both

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instances the control is primitive and inefficient. We have no active banking administration, in the service of the public, which has direct power over the practices of the banks and uses that power for well conceived public purposes. This would still be the case if the banks were merged and centralized under private ownership.

The banking system of England, which is so highly praised by those who see that we have too many small banks, is an inefficient instrument of social policy, and has been unable to do much to prevent or alleviate the depression in Great Britain. It is, in fact, one of the chief objects of criticism by the Socialists. The British Labor party, in its program of socialization, has set down nationalization of the banks as its first and most important objective. You cannot run a society planned in the interest of the majority so long as the allotment of credit and the investment of new capital are chaotically determined by the judgments of individuals about the best chances of profit for themselves.

The situation, therefore, is this. In any real attempt to reconstruct our society, we shall need, not only a centralized banking system, but one which is not privately owned and managed. In order to get banks which, though still far from being an efficient social instrument, are still as immune from failure as those of England, we shall at least have to bring about a high degree of centralization under private ownership. The Glass banking bill does not make possible any such centralization; it makes only a few short steps in that direction. Even this bill is opposed by popular leaders in Congress. Not until the well justified popular distrust of Wall Street is divorced from the outworn belief in the value of small private enterprise, and from the interests which support that belief, shall we be able to do what is necessary with the banks.

Stealing Votes from the Radicals

LAST November's election was stolen, so far as New York City is concerned. Whether the result would have been altered by an honest count is not known; but the count was not honest. Tammany Democrats throughout the city, obviously acting on orders from above, returned false figures regarding the vote. Many thousands of ballots properly cast for Joseph V. McKee were discarded. Large numbers of Republican votes were not tabulated. As for Socialists and Communists, their votes were thrown away in the blithest spirit. At least twenty-three voting-machine rolls are mysteriously "missing." Scores of election officials have been indicted—not at the instigation of New York's Tammany-controlled district attorney, who did his best to let the situation go without any action. The impetus came from federal officials and Governor Lehman.

While no one need be surprised at this state of affairs, which has long existed, some aspects of it are worth thinking about. When the returns from the late election were reported, everyone was astonished at the smallness of the Socialist and Communist vote. Although the Literary Digest poll had indicated that the Socialist candidate might get two or two and a half millions, his actual vote was 881,951. The Communist vote was 102,785, hardly more than twice the forty-eight thousand recorded in 1928. But perhaps the difference is explained by the fact that The Literary Digest counted radical votes honestly, and the election officials did not. It is impossible to say how many Socialist and Communist votes were lost in New York City by the methods referred to; but there is reason to believe that the number was large. New York is, moreover, an important center of radicalism, which would have returned a heavy proportion of the national vote.

There is also reason to believe that similar tactics were employed in other parts of the country. There are some cases known to the editors of The New Republic where individuals cast Socialist or Communist votes and the entire vote of the precinct was divided between the Republican and Democratic candidates. We are aware of no reason for believing that radicals received any better treatment in Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia or indeed any other city, than they did in New York.

The folly of these tactics should be apparent to all sensible men—which, of course, does not include very many election officials. For many years, those who advocate violent revolution in this country have been told that their strategy was unnecessary, that in America you can bring about a revolution through the ballot box. The election officials who throw away radical votes make a monkey out of anyone who employs this argument. In effect they say to the revolutionist: "The orderly processes of government are denied to you. The only way by which you can get a hearing for your doctrines is by force."

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The Worst Banking in the World

IT WOULD be difficult to imagine American ingenuity allowing a third of our automobiles to collapse on the highways, so broken that nothing remained but to strip the wreckage and push it off into a ditch. That, however, is what has happened during the past twelve years to the American banks. Yet assurances are still made that our banking system has been responsible for our unequaled economic progress as a nation, and that the system is the best in the world.

On the contrary it is probably the worst. At the same time it is the most elaborately supervised. In our sense of the word, indeed, banking in other countries is not supervised at all, yet failures in those countries are exceptional; in some countries they never occur. What makes the situation more discreditable for us is that our banking has been under supervision for more than a hundred years—longer than any other form of business enterprise.

Superficially, this may be taken as a bad case for the principle of government regulation in general. As a matter of fact, it leaves that principle practically untouched, for there are two obvious violations of common sense in our practice which must stultify any principle either of good banking or of good regulation which they encounter. These are that we have a hundred times too many banks, and fifty times too many supervisory authorities.

At present there are about 18,000 banks. It is not necessary to reduce the number to 180, though that would be enough, since the function of banks, like that of railways and communication systems, is regional rather than local; but it is necessary to reduce it very greatly by consolidating thousands of uneconomic and vulnerable units into regional organizations of adequate size. Instead of having one-half of the banking of the country concentrated in one-half of one percent of the banks, and the other half of the business dissipated among the other 99.5 percent of them, we should have banks of less disparate size and all large enough to provide themselves with a competent management and a portfolio of assets sufficiently diversified to protect their depositors. This reform, which has been advocated by economists for some forty years, and is provided for in the Glass Bill, now pending in Congress, has always been effectually suffocated by the steady opposition of bankers, both large and small, who prefer to hang on to their vested interests and take their chances with economic evolution.

The other basic defect in our banking—the confused and divided responsibility for supervision—is one of the more remarkable examples of what can be produced by state and federal sovereignties operating simultaneously in the same field. First we have state banks, chartered and supervised by each of the forty-eight states and operated under laws which in no two of the forty-eight are uniform. Moreover most of the states have at least two kinds of banks and banking laws apiece and many have more. Then we have national banks, chartered and supervised by the Comptroller of the Currency—who as it happens has practically nothing to do with the currency. The Comptroller also supervises state banks in the District of Columbia. In addition to all this there is the Federal Reserve System, which comprises all the national banks and any state banks able and willing to enter it. The national banks and the Comptroller's supervision of them come under the National Bank Act, except that as members of the Federal Reserve System they come under the Federal Reserve Act also. This Act prescribes not only for national banks as members of the System, but also for the state banks which are members of it, and lays down the duties of the Federal Reserve Board, which are conditioned by the fact that both the national banks and the state banks belonging to the System are only partially under its authority.

The right of the states to charter banks has been exercised since before the formation of the federal government, and though in early years its constitutionality was frequently questioned, and most notably by two authorities who scarcely agreed on anything else—Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun—the complete subversion of state banks was never attempted till it was made feasible by the strong federal sentiment prevailing in Congress during the Civil War. During the preceding three-quarters of a century, the right of the federal government to charter banks had also been challenged, of course, and far more vehemently, for the Union was still an experimental thing; and though the Supreme Court in 1819 affirmed the constitutionality of that right in a decision, McCulloch vs. Maryland, which ranks close to the Constitution itself in political importance, Andrew Jackson and the majority of his countrymen triumphantly ignored that affirmation for many years.

When Congress in 1863 finally reëstablished its right to charter banks, the intention was to abolish state banks and make banking exclusively a national affair. It therefore struck at the state banks by putting a prohibitory tax on what was thought to be their essential function—the issue of circulating notes. But as a result of commercial evolution the importance of that function was already on the decline, with the result that a steadily increasing number of banks were able to do without it. Consequently the tax was ineffective, and by the early

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nineties the majority of banks in this country were again under state charter. This preponderance has continued ever since, and for many years state banks have outnumbered national banks more than two to one. Although the majority of state banks are extremely small, many of the largest banks have also, as trust companies, been under state charters, so that not only the bulk of the banks but at times the bulk of banking business have been outside the national system.

Out of such a situation it is inevitable that a rivalry between federal and state jurisdictions should grow up—a rivalry which at times has been insidious and unrecognized, and at times open and determined. No state-bank supervisor has been content to be overshadowed among the banks in his own state by a federal official in Washington, and no Comptroller of the Currency has been content to let the national banks fall behind the state banks. The state legislatures and the national Congress have shared this jealousy for the systems of their own creation. The result of the rivalry has been degradation of banking standards, since each sovereignty has sought to make its system the more attractive to banking interests.

One of the first examples of this occurred in 1900, when the minimum capital required for national banks was lowered. Previously, no national bank could be organized with less than $50,000 of capital, though state banks might be organized in some states with a tenth of that amount. Mr. Charles G. Dawes, then Comptroller of the Currency, succeeded in getting Congress to lower the limit for national banks, and as a consequence gained a number of small banks from the state systems. His successors found it a disastrous gain.

Another serious impairment of national bank standards occurred when the law was amended to allow national banks to make real-estate loans on competitive terms with state banks. Originally the national banks had been held very straitly to commercial banking, and the change, which permitted them to invest in long-term mortgages a considerable portion of the money that they were under obligation to pay out to their customers on demand, was directly brought about by the fact that the state laws were much more "liberal." Such investment by banks has been one of the principal causes of their difficulties.

A more important and more general effect of our dual banking sovereignty has been frustration of the purposes and policies of the Federal Reserve System, whose activities have been conditioned throughout its history by the enervating fact that only a minority of the banks of the country belong to it, and that those which do belong may at any time withdraw from it. The national banks all belong to it, of course, and so do most of the large state banks and trust companies. The latter, however, do so not because they think it necessary, but because they like to support voluntarily an institution which is so good for the country. Moreover, as members of the System, voting for the directors of the Reserve Banks and always able to snub the System by withdrawal, they exert more influence than they would if they stayed outside it.

Under such circumstances, it is not to be supposed that the banks are constantly vetoing and flouting their supervisors. That sort of thing is unnecessary, because the limitations of supervisory authority are so obvious that issues are never raised which might force a general break. Nor is it to be suggested that the existence and functioning of the Reserve System, for instance, are unnecessary—on the contrary, the banking situation might be much worse if there were no Federal Reserve to supply at least a modicum of homogeneity and unity in our banking. The evil lies rather in an insidious impairment of banking control—a blighting of reform at its very conception. It is this that made Senator Glass say that the dual banking system was the curse of American banking.

These disadvantages of the dual banking system from the social point of view are advantages, of course, from the point of view of the individual banker. The acme of its convenience to him is exemplified in those numerous cases where a bank operates simultaneously under two charters, one granted by the federal government, the other by a state. Legally it is two banks under one management and control operating at one location, but with two names and two sets of powers. What it cannot do under one of its charters, it does under the other. The president of such a dual bank recently defended in a banking magazine the "system" that makes such things possible with an argument of surpassing naïveté, for he urged in favor of it the very consideration that in the public interest makes it undesirable. When state supervision was severe, he said, they had the national system to go to, and when that was unreasonable they could turn to the state.

Naturally it is the state bankers rather than the national bankers who oppose unification of control, though the latter see nothing to gain from it and something to lose. The concern of the state bankers was manifested at the last convention of the American Bankers' Association in considerable sincere vociferation; and the following passage from their resolutions is an example of how they expressed themselves on the subject: "We are unalterably opposed to the so-called unification of all banking under federal control in place of the present dual system of state and national banks. . . ."

Of the constitutionality of unification there seems to be no doubt, especially since the Supreme Court has never failed to affirm previous extensions of federal authority over banking. There are several constitutional paths to be followed. Unification may be achieved as a measure to protect the fiscal powers of the government, as a measure of interstate commerce, or as a measure regulating the

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monetary system. The last course is especially inviting; demand deposits have long been the principal element of our monetary system, since nine-tenths of our business is transacted through their medium, and the Constitution puts the monetary system under the exclusive control of Congress. Incredible as it may seem, therefore, unification is one reform that is not hindered by the terms of the Constitution, but is required by it.

But though the Constitution opens the way, there are two obstacles that even the Constitution cannot easily prevail against. The first is that the existing chaotic situation is advantageous to individual banking and political interests. The second is that banks are not automobiles. If they were, a hundred years of loss and inconvenience from collapsible banking and adjustable supervision would be quite enough to arouse an intelligent interest in banking reform and an effective demand for it.

BRAY HAMMOND.

Technocracy and Communism

THE Technocracy craze, as such, is about over. A few more weeks, and it bids fair to take its place with miniature golf, Mah Jong and the dodo. I wonder what will come next? . . . Personally, I hope we go back to miniature golf: I hadn't quite finished with it when they whisked it away.

At its height, the Technocracy epoch was indeed something worth watching. No newspaper appeared without at least one article explaining it, written by a man who was only slightly handicapped by the obvious fact that he had no notion what it was all about. The cartoonists decided, without justification, that Technocracy meant robots, and flooded the land with pictures of mechanical monsters. The pun in which the word "erg" is substituted for the word "egg" had been made in print, up to January 25, 312 times. Of nine radio programs on a recent evening, eight had jokes about Technocracy and the ninth was the Federation of Churches broadcast. Two new magazines wholly devoted to the subject have appeared; one of them, in its first issue, reprinted nearly all the previous articles on Technocracy, and must have left the editors wondering what on earth they could put in their second issue—if any. A bright young newspaper man in Los Angeles, being three thousand miles away and therefore able to dodge Howard Scott's wrath, has appeared in a talking motion picture explaining the subject, which, from the description (I haven't seen it) ought to complete the bewilderment of those already pretty well fuddled by the printed matter. Books on Technocracy have been issuing from the presses at the rate of one a day, or on busy days, two, nearly all of them accompanied by the usual official repudiation by Mr. Scott. Even Europe has added Technocracy to its store of knowledge of America, which now has six items (the others being: Uncle Shylock, Indians, cowboys, lynching and Charlie Chaplin).

The reasons for the popularity of the new religion are of course simple and obvious, an eloquent testimony to the depth of our present national misery. Throughout the country, people are badly frightened. They feel that perhaps this depression is not just like all the previous ones, after all; that possibly our economic system is really cracking up; that we may need some magical new formula to prevent a cataclysm. To those in this frame of mind, Technocracy has come as a godsend. It is so new that it does not have the stigma which attaches to such words as Socialism and Communism. It is, as far as they know, a strictly American product, justifying the faith that when it comes to ideas, the Yankee can lick the world, by jingo! It is reported to be purely an engineering product, just like automobiles, cigarette lighters and Boulder Dam. It ignores politics, which suits President Babbitt of the Zenith Rotary Club and his fellow members right down to the ground. Finally, its leader, Mr. Howard Scott, is pictured in the press as having the ideal qualities to lead the new crusade: a dash of Jenghiz Khan, a touch of Mussolini, half a dram of Savonarola, and a family resemblance to the young Edison, who also pulled miracles out of a hat. This is unfair to the unlucky Mr. Scott, whom I have known and liked for the customary fifteen years (without which no one is allowed to write about him); but I am reporting the picture in the public mind, not the reality. Finally, the Utopia which in the popular imagination is offered by Technocracy is not only very definite, but highly attractive: you work four hours a day, four days a week, from the age of 25 to 45, and everybody in the community has an income ten times as great as the present one, which would mean a family average of about $20,000 a year. In vain do Mr. Scott and his confreres plead that these figures are only the roughest sort of estimate, intended to make a picture of the unrealized possibilities of our productive machinery: no one can erase these definite statistics from the public mind—and especially from the minds of those who do not now enjoy a family income of twenty thousand dollars a year, of whom there are several.

The waning of Technocracy as a public phenomenon which has been comparable in all respects with the yo-yo has not come because the figures used by the Technocrats have been punctured. Most of these figures have, in fact, been shown to be errone-

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ous, though as George Soule pointed out in these pages, Howard Scott's estimates are often based upon complete use of new inventions, or continuous capacity operation which does not now exist, so that it is unfair to answer him by showing that the 1932—or for that matter the 1929—statistics do not bear out his assertions of increased productivity per man hour. Most of the fanatical followers of the cult do not know that the statistics are wrong, and would not care greatly if they did. Their eyes are fixed on the sixteen-hour week and the $20,000 income. As they march through the desert toward the promised land, what does it matter to them that the average annual rainfall has been understated in the one place and overstated in the other?

This attitude seems to me sound sense. After all, the tendency which Mr. Scott and his colleagues have pointed out so dramatically and with such success in catching the public ear, does exist. It is no answer to tell him, when he says something has increased six hundred times, that it has actually increased only twenty-three times. Twenty-three times is a serious enough matter for our civilization. The central thesis of Technocracy is after all a familiar one stated in an unfamiliar way. It is that under the present organization of society, the workers, collectively, are not given wages large enough to buy back the product of their toil. If in addition, technological advance is putting men out of work faster than new industries can be developed to take care of them, that is only an additional complication in a situation which was already impossible.

It is clear, I think, that many of the persons who are so enthusiastic about Technocracy are in this state of mind simply because they do not realize the doctrine's implications. If it were seriously proposed—as it certainly now is not—to set up a technocratic state, they would shrink back in alarm from the radical implications of the proposal. For a technocratic society would mean the abolition of all inheritance. It would mean the destruction of all savings. It would mean that no one would be allowed to receive interest, or to speculate.

I am astonished that more attention has not been paid to the essential parallel between Technocracy and Communism. Mr. Scott, of course, has sought to dissociate his plan from Socialism or Communism, on the ground that these older schemes still cling to "the price system"; undoubtedly he has made numerous converts by saying that Communism is now old stuff, since many people demand the newest thing intellectually just as they do when buying motor cars or hats. Psychologically, he has had the advantage, as I have already suggested, of avoiding the odium which attaches to "radicalism" in the United States. But in fact his criticism is false. "The price system" is simply techno-jargon for "the profit system," which is the object of the Marxians' unceasing attack. At one time, the Russian Communists actually considered abolishing their own paper currency, through the process of permitting it to inflate until it was worthless, and substituting for it a currency based on labor hours; and the chief reason they didn't was that they decided they had other, more pressing tasks on their hands and had better wait. But even today, Russian currency bears a closer resemblance to Mr. Scott's energy-certificates than to the money of western Europe or America. The Russian ruble is not redeemable in gold or anything else. Its purchasing power is arbitrarily established and maintained by the authority of the Soviet state.

In every other way, Technocracy and Communism are intended to reach the same end. Technocracy would give an equal income to every adult, no matter what he did, before and after his years of compulsory labor as well as during them. Marxism has always had the same formula: "From each according to his means, to each according to his necessity." Marxism has always said that interest is theft; Technocracy abolishes it. Technocracy says that "the price system" (private capitalism) throttles the productive capacity of society; Socialism has said this for seventy years. Technocracy's "Energy Survey of North America," with its exhaustive compilation of data showing the rise of debt and the decline of man-power, will reveal no tendencies which have not long been familiar to thoughtful economists and engineers, and none of importance which are not envisaged in the Marxian analysis of private capitalism.

Mr. Scott and his confreres have been much criticized for refusing to tell how society could be remade nearer to their hearts' desire. It may be that they underrate the obstacles in the road; and certainly their calmness is irritating to anybody who has ever tried to get a single law changed, or has even attempted to persuade as many as ten people to do anything whatever. Yet there are great psychological advantages in Technocracy's aloofness. For the moment that its leaders descended into the marketplace and began to agitate for the abolition of our present society, that moment they would become just another group of propagandists, pleading a special cause. They would be lined up alongside the Communists, Socialists, single-taxers, Douglas social crediteers, inflationists, silverites and stamped-scrip men. Today Scott's strategic strength lies in the very fact that he refuses to answer questions, that he declines to be for a moment "constructive"—that last resource of the fatuous. "I am a diagnostician," he says in effect, "not a surgeon. I tell you that your society is going to hell, and how and why. If you want to be saved, go ahead and save yourselves, on the lines I have indicated." Recent reports suggest that he is about to come down out of his ivory tower, and I hope they are wrong. The organization which will doubtless be formed at once to bring about the technocratic state ought to have nothing to do with Scott, nor he with it.

It is clear, I think, that we are not going to have

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Technocracy, any more than we are going to have Socialism under any other name, within any future which can now be envisaged, or without a preliminary period of incredible suffering. For surely all sensible men must now agree that the problems of our society have outrun the collective intelligence and good will of mankind. Or to put it another way: the world is now ruled, essentially, by public opinion, even in the countries which are nominally under a dictatorship; and we have not been able to improvise quickly enough an effective education which would make it possible for democracy to act with intelligence. The old era is unable to die, the new one to be born. To look no farther than our own country: if any important national or international policy of the United States within the past decade has been decided on a basis of wisdom, the genuine best interest of the common good, I cannot now recall it; and if someone brings forward such an example, I am prepared to argue that it was probably accidental, a good action for a bad reason. In the wrongs which are done to us, there is no malevolence, or only the minutest trace; it is "stupidity, Madam—sheer stupidity."

True, hunger sharpens the wits. When suffering becomes sufficiently intense and widespread, we shall begin to take steps in the right direction (although any accidental, momentary reappearance of the fever of 1929 could be trusted to halt those steps). But if our past history is any sort of guide to our future, we shall postpone action until the last possible moment; we shall then do less than is necessary, break down again, and so on. When a general, fighting a war, makes a mistake, he can usually rectify it by shedding enough of the blood of his men. The overdrafts of our political leaders on the bank of experience are met by the suffering and death of children, women and men. Of the capacity to suffer we have a bountiful supply.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

Hull-House in 1932: III

AROUND the social workers of Hull-House today there stretches a sea of misery more appalling even than that which discouraged Miss Addams in the nineties. This winter even those families who have previously managed to hang on to their own savings and earnings have been forced to apply for relief.

A relief-worker's cross-section of an industrial suburb shows the sinking level of the standard of living. The people are mostly Poles. Every pressure has been brought to bear on them to make them spend their money on motor-cars, radios, overstuffed furniture and other luxuries. And they are caught now between two worlds with no way of living comfortably in either of them—indeed, with little prospect of living at all.

A handsome girl of seventeen interprets for her mother, in whom the girl's stocky figure has expanded to enormous amorphous bulk, and changes not only her language but her expression and gestures, her personality, passing from English to Polish. She had till lately been doing all the housework for a real-estate man for $2 a week; but she decided he was imposing on her and quit. She is evidently high-spirited and independent—Americanized during the whoopee period. Her brother had had a job on the conveyor at a book-bindery; but they had managed by a mechanical improvement to eliminate his job, so that he is laid off with no prospect of reëmployment. The girl takes you up from the downstairs kitchen, where the family largely lives, and shows you the little-used upstairs with all the things that the salesmen have sold them: wadded couches and chairs that seem never to have been sat on, covered with a pattern of large oranges; a victrola; a wallpaper patterned with large blue, pink and magenta blossoms. On the walls, as in all these houses, in ornate gold frames, are Slavic saints and madonnas, bristling with Polish characters and Byzantine embroidery and wearing spiky gold crowns.

Elsewhere an old man is dying of a tumor, with no heat in the house, on a cold day. His pale bones of arms lie bent like bent pins as he gasps; nothing is heard in the house but his breath. The grandmother, her sharp Polish nose sticking out from under a bonnetlike cap, stands herself silent as a ghost. They are both very old. Their married granddaughter, in well fitting American street-clothes, an American middle-class woman, but today as badly off as they are, has just been to the relief station for coal.

In another place, a family of five have only three small rooms in a basement and they have sunk below any standard: the father grinningly glaringly drunk in the middle of the morning, the mother stupid or discouraged with her struggle against poverty and filth. They live around the stove with their small dirty children in the close sweetish sickish smell of boiling clothes and cooking. Where they sleep on two narrow cots, the bedclothes are old twisted gray rags that have not even been smoothed out flat. They don't know much English; they can't explain what they have done about insurance and relief; they don't understand themselves. All they know is that they have that dirty little hole from which they have not yet been expelled and where the man, with a little liquor in him, can imagine himself the shrewd substantial father of a family, with the situation well under

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control. In another basement, however, the young husband has carpentered and painted the big cellar room which with a tiny bedroom is all they have so that it looks almost like a human dwelling. He used to work for the Fruitgrowers' Express, but has been laid off a long time. The stout blond girl he is married to, who has to be on her feet all day, has just had a collapse due to her heart. They have no children but keep a canary in a cage. And another young wife has put kewpie dolls around in an otherwise bare apartment and has made blue curtains for the cot where her two young children sleep. She and her husband are very fond of each other and very fond of the children. They are the kind of people that hate most to ask for relief and they have put it off as long as they could, with the result that, though good-looking and young, they are now thin and pale with undernourishment.

A pink, clear-eyed, innocent-eyed woman, alone in an immaculately kept kitchen all white oilcloth and green and white linoleum and with the latest thing in big gleaming gas-ranges, flushes at the relief-worker's questions. She is going to have a baby and has applied for money to pay a midwife. The relief-worker offers her a doctor but she is used to having the midwife. An elderly couple from Zurich lives in an apartment equally immaculate though far less completely equipped, amid blue and green chromolithographs of Swiss waterfalls and mountains and lakes. The woman is cooking a few slivers of onions on a tiny coal-stove which was intended primarily for heat. The husband is out picking up coal on the railroad tracks in order to keep it going. The woman suddenly begins to cry as she is answering the relief-worker's questions, then as suddenly stops. The husband, a little smiling man with German mustaches, comes back with a few pieces of coal: the railroad detectives chased him away. He was formerly an industrial chemist and has recently turned his ingenuity to inventing little gambling toys. One of them he has a fair prospect of selling: you shoot a marble which falls into one of a series of holes and knocks up a little tin flap: "Swiss Navy" counts lowest and "America" 100 percent. In another place, the man who lost his job on the book-binding conveyor has a brother in the artistic field—a young violinist whose profession has been abolished by the talkies.

Above the straight criss-crossed streets of small houses, houses of dull brick and old gray boards, and newer little two-story Noah's Arks, prick the sharp Roman Catholic spire and the two bulbs of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The single men go to flophouses. During the last year (September 30, 1931—September 30, 1932), 50,000 have registered at the Clearing House. Those who are not residents of Chicago are ordered to leave the city: if they got there by paying their fare, they are given a half-fare which will take them home. Others are sent to the asylum, the poorhouse, the veterans' home; referred to the blind pension, the juvenile court. About 500 men a month are disposed of in this way. The Oak Forest poorhouse, called "the Graveyard," has people sleeping in the corridors and turned 19,000 away last year. The rest are sent to the shelters, where they get two meals a day and a bed.

Among the high whitewashed walls of an old furniture factory, the soiled yellow plaster and the scrawled and punctured blackboards of an old public school, the scraped-out offices and pompous paneling of a ghastly old courthouse; on the floors befouled with spit, in the peppery-sweetish stink of cooking food, sulphur fumigations, bug exterminators, rank urinals embalmed with creosote—elements figuring more or less prominently as one goes from room to room, floor to floor, but all fused in the stagnant smell of humanity; they eat their chicken-feed and slum amid the deafening clanking of trays and dump the slops in g. i. cans; wait for prizefights or movies of Thurston or Tarzan (provided to keep them out of the hands of the Communists or from holding meetings themselves) in "recreation halls" with "Hoover's Hotel" chalked on the wall—recreation rooms suffocating with smoke, strewn like vacant lots with newspapers, smeared like the pavements with phlegm: here they fill the lecture seats, squat on the steps of the platform, stretch out on old newspapers on the floor. In one place, a great wall-legend reminds them: "The Blood of God Can Make the Vilest Clean," and they get routed to mess through a prayer-meeting so that they may be exposed to religion on the way: when they come back to the recreation hall, they discover that a cheerful waltz has served merely as bait to an harangue by an old Cicero policeman who has been saved. They send their clothes to be fumigated and, if they are wet with the winter rain, ruined. They herd into steaming showers, the young still building some flesh on straight frames, the old with flat chests, skinny arms and round sagging bellies; and they flop at last on the army cots or in the bunks in double tiers, where the windows shut against the piercing cold keep in the sour smell—men in holey socks and slit union-suits, men tattooed with fancy pictures or the emblems of some service they have left—resting bunioned feet taken out of flattened shoes or flat arches wound around with adhesive tape—lying with newspapers for pillows, their arms behind their heads or with a sheet pulled over their faces or wrapped up in blankets rigid on their backs, their skins stretched tight over their jawbones so that they seem almost like the jaws of the dead.

There is a clinic which does what it can to head off the syphilis and clap. There is also a great deal of t. b., to which the Negroes seem to have a fatal susceptibility; and in one shelter, spinal meningitis got out of hand for a while and broke

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nine backs on its rack. Another common complaint of the flophouses is poisoning due to drinking a dilution of wood alcohol which the inmates buy for fifteen cents a pint, which looks and tastes, as somebody says, like a mixture of benzine, kerosene and milk, and which usually lands them in the infirmary or the psychopathic ward. One man, however, given his choice between his bottle and admission to the shelter, refused to give up the bottle: he preferred to spend the night in the cold rather than surrender his only excitement in a life so monotonous and aimless. In the Salvation Army shelter they will not take in drinkers, but the others do the best they can with them. In one shelter there is a cripple who comes in drunk every night. "I wouldn't be surprised," says the manager, "if a hearse drove up and a dead man got up and walked out and asked for a flop." One man turned up "lousy as a pet coon—so lousy nobody would go nearum and they puttum in the stable with the horse for the night and the horse tried to get away. The next morning they gave-um a shower and scrubbedum with a long-handled brush." But most of the cases in the infirmaries—from exhaustion to bad kidneys and body sores—come down to the same basic disease: starvation.

Razor-slashings and shootings provide other patients—though the prospect of a day of work a week and liberation from the shelters is said to have diminished these. The bad characters are sent to the bull-pens in the basement, where at close quarters, in fetid air, they sleep on hard benches with their coats under their heads. Newcomers for whom there is no room above are dumped down to join them.

Yet Chicago has been apparently rather conspicuously efficient in providing and running these shelters. At best, it is like the life of barracks —but with none of the common work and purpose which gives a certain amount of stimulus to even a dull campaign. In the shelters there is nothing to coöperate on and nothing to look forward to, no developments, no chance for distinction. The old man is ending his life without a home and with no hope of one; the wage-earner who has hitherto been respectable finds himself dropped down among casuals and gradually acquires their attitude; the young man who comes to maturity during the workless period of the depression never learns the habit of work, adapts himself to and is formed by a world of casuals. (There are few actual hoboes here: the hobo can do better stealing or begging.)

In so far as men are unable to adapt themselves, they must live under a continual oppression of fear or guilt or despair. One sees among them faces that shock by their incongruity: men who look as if they had never had a day's ill health or done a day's careless work in their lives. Now they jump at the opportunity given them to spend a day a week clearing the rubbish off vacant lots or cleaning the streets underneath the Loop tracks. This is the only thing that stands between them and the complete loss of independence which brings with it the loss of personality and degrades them to the primal, neutral, undifferentiated city grayness, depriving them even of the glow of life which sets them off from the pavements and the factories and the old newspapers and the fog, rubbing them down to nothing, forcing them out of life.

None of these single-men's shelters, however, produces such an impression of horror as the Angelus Building on South Wabash Avenue, where families of homeless Negroes have taken refuge. This neighborhood was once fairly well-to-do; but today, left behind by the city's growth in other directions, it presents a desolation worse than that of the slums. When the snow in the darkening afternoon seems as dingy as the dusk and the sky as cold and tangible as the snow—as if the neutral general medium of the city had condensed in such a way as to make it harder to move and exist in—the houses, scattered interminably along the straight miles of the street, monotonous without being uniform, awkward or cheap attempts at various types of dignified architecture, in gray limestone, colorless boards or red bricks, whether inhabited or not, all seem abandoned now. Through the windowless slots of one you can see through the whole hollow shell: it has been gutted of even its partitions; the clumsy romanesque prongs of another make it look like a blackened pulled tooth; another displays, stuck onto its façade some distance above the ground, a pretentious brownstone doorway from under which the front steps have been knocked like a lower jaw. As a climax to all this, the Angelus Building looms blackly on the corner of its block, seven stories, thick with dark windows, caged in a blackened mesh of fire-escapes like mattress-springs on a junk-heap, hunched up, hunchback proportioned, jam-crammed in its dumbness and darkness with miserable wriggling life.

It was built in 1892 and was once the Ozark Hotel, popular during the World's Fair. In the dim little entrance hall, the smudged, rubbed and roughened mosaic, the plaster pattern of molding on the ceiling, the fancy black grill of the elevator, most of it broken off, do not recall any former splendor—they are abject, chips and shreds of the finery of the dead, trodden down into the waste where it has been left. In its hundred cells there is darkness: the tenants can't pay for the light; and cold: the heating system doesn't work. It is an old fire-trap which has burned several times—killing a number of people the last time; and now, as it is good for nothing else, it has been turned over by its owner to the Negroes, who flock into the tight-packed apartments and get along as best they can on such money as they can collect from the Charities.

There are former domestic servants and porters,

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former mill-hands and stock-yard workers; there are whores and hoodlums living next door to respectable former laundresses and former Baptist ministers; one veteran of the World War and former foreman of the Sunkist Pie Company now lives in cold and darkness with his widowed mother, even the furniture which he had been buying for $285 and on which he had paid all but the last instalment of $50.20 taken away by the furniture company. They burn kerosene lamps and warm themselves by charcoal buckets and coal-stoves. The water-closets won't flush and the water stands in the bath-tubs.

The children play in the dark halls or along the narrow iron galleries of an abysmal central shaft, which, lighted faintly through glass at the top, is foggy and stifling with coal-smoke like a nightmare of jail or Hell. In the silence of this shaft ominous bangs and breakages occur—then all is deathly silence again. The two top floors have been stripped by fire and by the tenants' tearing things out to burn or sell them: apartments have lost their doors and bathroom plumbing lies uncovered. These two floors have been condemned and are deserted. Relief workers who have visited the Angelus Building have come away so struck with horror that they have made efforts to have the whole place condemned—to the piteous distress of the occupants who consider it an all-right-enough place to live when you've got no other place to go. And where to send these sixty-seven black families? Brought to America in the holds of slave-ships and afterwards released from their slavery with the chance of improving their lot, they are being forced back into the black cavern of the Angelus Building where differing standards of living, sometimes won by the work of generations, are all being reduced to zero.

Men who want to keep clear of the jail-like shelters live as they can in the streets and huddle at night under the Loop or build shacks on empty lots. On whatever waste-places they are allowed, the scabby-looking barnacles appear, knocked together from old tar-paper and tin, old car-bodies, old packing boxes, with old stovepipes leaning askew, amid the blackened weeds in the snow and the bones of old rubbish-piles. One "Hooverville" on Harrison Street flies a tattered black rag like the flag of despair.

The inhabitants of the Hoovervilles forage from the city dumps, as do many of those whom charity will not help or who for one reason or another will not go to it or for whom the relief they get is inadequate. (In order to receive any official relief, one has to meet so many requirements that there eventually arises a class of professional requirement-meeters who are sometimes able to get help where people who need it more fail.)

There is not a garbage-dump in Chicago which is not diligently haunted by the hungry. Last summer in the hot weather when the smell was sickening and the flies were thick, there were a hundred people a day coming to one of the dumps, falling on the heap of refuse as soon as the truck had pulled out and digging in it with sticks and hands. They would devour all the pulp that was left on the old slices of watermelon and canteloupe till the rinds were as thin as paper; and they would take away and wash and cook discarded onions, turnips, potatoes, cabbage or carrots. Meat is a more difficult matter, but they salvage a good deal of that too. The best is the butcher's meat which has been frozen and hasn't spoiled. In the case of the other meat, there are usually bad parts that have to be cut out or they scald it and sprinkle it with soda to kill the rotten taste and the smell. Fish is likely to be impossible—though some people have made fish-head soup. Soup has also been made out of chicken-claws.

A private incinerator at Thirty-fifth and La Salle Streets which disposes of the garbage from restaurants and hotels has been regularly visited by people in groups of as many as twenty at a time who pounce upon anything that looks edible before it is thrown into the furnace. The women complained to investigators that the men took an unfair advantage by jumping on the truck before it was unloaded; but a code had finally been established by which the same people would always come at the same time of day so as to give everybody a chance. Another dump at Thirty-first Street and Cicero Avenue has been the center of a Hooverville of three hundred people.

The family of a laid-off restaurant dish-washer lived on food from the dump for two years. They had to cook it on the gas of the people downstairs, as their own had been shut off. Their little girl got ptomaine poisoning. Two veterans of the World War who had been expelled with the bonus army from Washington and made their homes in the fire-boxes of an old kiln, were dependent on the dump for some time, though a buddy of theirs found he could do better by panhandling at people's doors. One widow with a child of nine who had formerly made $18 a week in a factory and who has since been living on $4 a week relief and two or three hours' work a day at fifty cents an hour, has tried to get along without garbage but has had to fall back on it frequently during a period of three years. Another widow who used to do housework and laundry, but now had no work at all, fed herself and her fourteen-year-old son on garbage. Before she picked up the meat, she would always take off her glasses so that she couldn't see the maggots; but it sometimes made the boy so sick to look at it and smell it that he couldn't bring himself to eat it. He weighed only eighty-two pounds and was badly undernourished.

Many people in the Cicero Avenue Hooverville have been poisoned from eating garbage and some of them have died. One man ate a can of condemned crab-meat which had been thrown away by a chain store and, when found several days later, was in a condition similar to that of the crab-meat.

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In this darkness of Chicago, life itself seems darker. This world goes deathward—workers and investors alike.

The antagonism between property and poverty is more obviously bitter than in New York, where a mist of liberalism hangs between the two sides. Liberalism flourishes in proportion to the distance of the leisure class from the sources of their incomes; and in Chicago, as one man said to me, too many of the best people can remember when grandfather stuck pigs. Packingtown is right there on the premises. They know what money-getting means.

And in general Chicago is much more a true community than New York. The Chicagoans are keen to rival New York, put up more stupefying big buildings each year; and if boom times should come again, would undoubtedly go on blindly spreading and building till Chicago had become as unhealthy and as unpleasant to live in as New York. But Chicago as yet has not arrived at the metropolitan rootlessness of population, the dissociation of sections and classes, which have been characteristic of New York. Chicago still hangs together; its inhabitants still conceive of it as their city, with whose glory their own fortunes are bound up. Here the repercussions on each other of the different classes and groups seem more violent and direct than in New York. And it is a wild town, a gambler's town, where people are out unashamedly to get by whatever means whatever they can. The failure of Sam Insull has knocked the bottom out of the investing world in Chicago—which included all classes of the community—to say nothing of the disarray into which it has thrown Chicago society; and the air is charged with angry desperation. The Industrial Squad seem to be more active and more brutal than in New York; and the Communists and other radicals seem more realistic and determined. The clashes between them have been more frequent and bloody. This last year has a terrific record of clubbings, shootings and killings, including assaults by the police on women and children. At the worst of these riots, in Melrose Park last May, a mixed group of policemen, gangsters and American legionnaires, riddled with machine-guns and beat up a couple of hundred people who had come to a Communist meeting; and the violence extended even to a representative of the Civil Liberties Union who, attempting to investigate the incident, found himself taken for a ride by a posse of gangsters and policemen and beaten up and thrown into a ditch. In Chicago there are no clever people chattering about Communism over their cocktails. Everybody is too acutely conscious of the tightening of the screws.

At five o'clock in the morning of December 8, the thermometer went down to almost zero. Opening the door and going outside was like breaking through the ice of a lake. The vagrants and the independents who had held out against the flophouses, reënforcing their patchy shacks, hugging their niches of doorways under bridges, hanging on in unheated lodgings, were driven with livid skins and red noses, to the refuge of the heated shelters. They stood around in the halls, the recreation rooms, the urinals, the bull-pens; when they got tired they lay down on the floor.

At four on the morning of the sixteenth the thermometer dropped to four below zero. The same night two hundred families were driven out of their apartments by fires. The old buildings go up like the paper houses that the clowns set fire to in the circus. A hundred and fifty of the people whose homes were burned were Negroes on the South Side, and the inhabitants of the Angelus Building with those gutted floors above them must have thanked their stars that nobody had mishandled his kerosene lamp or knocked over his charcoal burner.

During the cold spell, crime revives. The Chicagoans are always explaining that the crime wave has been merely ephemeral and that Mayor Cermak or the Secret Six or somebody is conclusively cleaning up the city. But the bootleggers claim that the Mayor's latest crusade has only had the effect of giving the police a fresh weapon to hold up the liquor trade. The night of December 13, in any case, no less than seven people were shot or otherwise done to death: the proprietor of a drugstore shot a twenty-four-year-old boy who was trying to stick him up; the police shot a twenty-year-old motor thief who was getting away with a car; liquor gangsters shot a policeman in a beer-flat of the kind that Cermak is trying to put out of business; a man described as a former lightweight was found with a bullet in his abdomen in a tailorshop that also sold beer; two bandits who were robbing a candy-store and stole $2.96, gagged the daughter of the proprietor in such a way that she choked to death; and an unemployed printer who had an obsession about bandits and had set bear-traps underneath his windows, shot and killed two policemen who had come to arrest him for not sending his children to school, his failure having been due to his objection to vaccination.

"Jack-rolling"—robbing people and beating them up in dark streets—has become conspicuously more common lately; and the brutality of the assault is often so far out of proportion to the resistance which the victim could have put up that it suggests an outbreak of fury. This city, with its great vitality, its handsome and female women, its excitement of high expectation, that excitement which New York has lost, is going to death like the others—it is merely going with greater violence.

Death for the poor and dispossessed; death for such stability and gayety and comradeship and distinction as the others have been able to create. The once well-to-do like the men in the shelters can only hang on to their bottles and, drinking, forget the blankness of the future—realizing the times need sobriety, swearing off, going steady to their offices and getting more and more nervous and uneasy as business shows no signs of picking up and

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the omens seem, if anything, worse—then with a rush taking to drinks again.

On the interminable latitude of West Congress Street, lit only at long intervals on one side by livid low-power lamps, where huge cubes of buildings are belted only rarely by a lighted department still at work and where black and blind ranks of trucks all alike stand posted in front of dark factories, some anonymous hand has chalked up on a corner: "VOTE RED. THE PEOPLE ARE GOOFY." EDMUND WILSON.

Washington Notes

Liberal or Conservative?—Balancing the Budget—Smiling Through—The Professor's Charts—Dictatorial Powers

THE REALLY interesting thing in Washington these days is the under-cover controversy between conservative and progressive Democrats to discover in which direction their President-elect is leaning and with which side he will ultimately line up. The President-elect, now in relative seclusion at Warm Springs after a series of Washington conferences, gives slight indication of his tendency. He consorts and confers with representatives of both elements, smiles upon one and all, is equally sympathetic, patient and apparently understanding with each. His "close friends," however, by no means emulate Mr. Roosevelt's even balance between the factions, and from them come long and seemingly authoritative statements of his position, his tendency and his intentions. The difficulty is that the "close friends" appear as completely divided in their opinion as anyone else, and the emanations concerning the true Rooseveltian attitude sharply conflict.

Just a few days before Roosevelt left for Georgia, Louis Howe made a speech to the students of journalism at Columbia. After telling them it was not possible to make an honest living out of politics, he declared that the next President is a liberal, that the next administration would be a liberal administration, that he and the next President hoped to see sentiment in the country divided along liberal and conservative lines. Almost simultaneously with Mr. Howe's proclamation concerning the liberalism of the incoming administration, another "close friend" penned an erudite article to prove that so far as monetary issues are concerned, Mr. Roosevelt will proceed along orthodox lines. Copious quotations from the party platform and from Mr. Roosevelt's campaign speeches were presented to prove that he is essentially conservative, that he can be relied upon to set his face against every form of inflation, that the thing to which he and his party are most irretrievably committed is the retention of a "sound currency."

That may be true, but nevertheless there will be some pretty keen disappointment upon the part of various of Mr. Roosevelt's ardent Western supporters in Congress, both Democratic and progressive, if he holds to a conservative economic policy when he does begin to function as President. The pressure for some form of currency inflation in Congress is exceedingly strong—so strong, in fact, that very good judges are convinced it will take all Mr. Roosevelt's power to prevent one of the many measures now being prepared from being passed.

The truth is that Mr. Roosevelt will be confronted in his first year as President with perhaps the most weighty and difficult financial problems any President has had. The failure of the present session of Congress to take any real step toward balancing the budget, either by raising the revenue or by reducing expenses, means that the national deficit for the year 1934 will be a really staggering one. In the course of the year, the Treasury will have to refinance or redeem government bonds amounting to nearly six billion dollars. With the banks already gorged with federal securities, this obviously will not be an easy task. The size of the deficit will unquestionably affect the execution of so huge a financial operation.

It is these facts which are causing the conservative New York friends of the Governor no little alarm, and explain why they have been so strongly in favor of Democratic support of Hoover's sales-tax program at this session. Some of them have plainly told the President-elect that failure to do anything toward bridging the gap between income and expenses before March may leave him with an unsolvable problem on his hands when the special session convenes. It will not then be possible, it is claimed, adequately to redeem his budget-balancing promise without resorting to extreme methods. I understand that Mr. Roosevelt has been neither disturbed nor even greatly interested in these rather panicky forecasts of the financiers. On the contrary, he has smilingly repeated that his chief desire is to get the farm legislation out of the way at this session, and if that is done, and he is given the authority to economize proposed in the Byrnes resolution, he has entire confidence in being able to solve any problems that may arise.

One thing about which everyone who has talked to him agrees is that Mr. Roosevelt has supreme confidence in his ability to carry out a program once he really is in the saddle. No one reports anything resembling trepidation or timidity upon his part as concerns the future. There are, of course, two ways of explaining this. The unfriendly one is that the next President has not yet grasped the weight and gravity of the job ahead, and approaches it with the joyous confidence of a good-tempered boy. The other is that his confidence is based on a knowledge of a concrete, well thought out and practical plan, which he has not as yet revealed to anyone, but which he is convinced will work.

It is reported here in Washington that there is such a program and that it has been largely prepared by the ubiquitous Professor Moley, who seems to be the most indispensable of all Roosevelt's advisers. The Professor, I am told, has prepared one of the most comprehensive charts of the government of the United States ever dreamed of, and has the whole scheme of reorganization and reduction worked out to the last decimal figure.

Aside from the economy and reorganization features, the Roosevelt policies, it is said, have been put on paper in a form that shows their relative importance, their anticipated effect, together with the difficulties of putting them into execution. These charts and blueprints of the Professor are unlike anything ever seen before. No President has

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ever been provided with so scientific an approach to his problems, nor has one had so clear an idea of what they are or how to proceed. The charts are most carefully guarded and are not for the prying reportorial eye. They mathematically demonstrate how, once in office with the power conferred by the Byrnes resolution, the road to a successful solution of every question is clear.

It will be intensely interesting to see Roosevelt's program developing along the charted lines and I can see no insuperable obstacle to its working out fairly well. But there is one trouble which I think he is bound to have, and which apparently has not been foreseen. It arises from the all-important Byrnes resolution. That the constitutionality of this will be tested in the courts seems quite certain. Just as soon as Mr. Roosevelt begins to put his reorganization and reduction plans in force, one of the groups affected will ask for an injunction on the ground that the law confers unconstitutional powers upon the President. This, however, will not necessarily mean a prolonged delay. Slow as the courts often are, they can move with great speed at times. Legal friends tell me that if this case were presented as dealing with a national emergency in which delay would greatly affect the public interests, a Supreme Court decision could easily be obtained inside of three months. Still, even that period of time may throw the chart calculations slightly off and cause a certain amount of professorial confusion.

Washington. T. R. B.

On ne Badine pas avec l'Amour

Big Night, by Dawn Powell. Maxine Elliott's Theatre, January 17, 1933.

Goodbye Again, by Allan Scott and George Haight. Masque Theatre, December 29, 1932.

I AM OBLIGED to part company with the Group Theatre on the choice of their latest play. We all know that literary and theatrical agents have their files crowded with plays; we all know, also, that, as Mr. John Anderson in one of those shrewd and uncannily generalized observations of his on the theatre has pointed out, the American theatre has arrived at a dainty situation. We have, as Mr. Anderson has told us, the ground cleared. The labors of critics, the insistence of leagues, the liberalization of the public mind (two-thirds indifference), the relaxation in moral as well as intellectual vigilance, the mortgage on emotional content that the Broadway theatre holds, all these (including the adolescent boredom of the New York theatre-going mind) have brought about, as it were, a clean slate (which means with dramatic comment now a let-her-rip typewriter). One might say we were all dressed up, though it would be better, perhaps, to say we were all undressed, and nowhere to go. Which is to say blow, winds, and crack your cheeks, smite through the thick rotundity of the theatre world—and where are the playwrights? This must be a sad shock to such as think that if we are told to eat what is good for us to eat, we eat it.

Everything is ready, then, and there are no playwrights. To return to the agents, they have plays. I should think half their plays were better as a choice than "Big Night." Indeed I heard once of a play that an agent received which began, as the curtain rose, with a sickness in one character that led immediately to throwing up. Now there is realism for you. It is not the realism of New York, so vaunted and so trashy, but rather a kind of cosmic realism, found on land and sea and known as well to aviators' flights. At any rate a strange, foolish aspect of realism is what the Group evening presents. It exposes nothing more significant than the husband's foot, all rosy and white, the gin bottles, the game of advertising men who apparently use their wives for profit with the buyers, and a very unconvincing amateur saturnalia.

Caesar is reported to have said once to a widow who gave her age as thirty-three (the version I heard of it) that it must be true since she had been saying it for seven years; the story applies to New York rough life as our stage presents it. The ladies of Lesbos were worse; they wore seven or more perfumes, for the neck, the legs, the breast, the hands, etcetera, which meant that in—as Boswell would call it—obscurity, anatomical geometry was as certain as the pole star; that was in the seventh century B. C. Some of their favorite perfumes, marjoram, for instance, are now cooking items, only a culinary lure remains to them. Trajan speaks of "our enlightened age," even without Times Square. There is a poem of Plato's that tells how a man finding some gold left a halter, but he who left the gold and not finding it knotted the halter he found (Ah, the tangled web of "Big Night"!). Lucilius, who after all was only a pensioner of Nero's, wrote an epigram in which he says that Euthychus the portrait painter got seven sons and never got one likeness, even among his children *(dramatis personae,* "Big Night"). In "The True History" Lucian, writing in the second century, speaks of soliciting "the reader's incredulity." Lucian speaks also, in "The Dialogues of the Dead," of the literary figurations of Truth as "the shadowy creature with the indefinite complexion." Lucian says, too, in the "Negrinus," that "the use that Rome may serve is as a school of the resistance to temptation"; and that makes us think of Milton's lines about "the fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that sallies out and seeks her adversary." What a sally this "Big Night" drama makes, what exercises, what a breath! "I do not," Lucian tells us, "believe in the supernatural because, unlike the rest of mankind, I do not see it; if I saw, I should doubtless believe, just as you all do." Even St. Francis, along with his gentle thanks for brother sun, brother wind, brother fire, sister water—*utile et humile et preciosa et casta*—speaks of his body—brother ass.

I have mentioned these diverse allusions not as some galaxy of display, but only to bring to the Group's attention, first, the fact that civilization has existed for a long time, and, second, in order to apply a somewhat more ancient wisdom by way of comment on their "Big Night" mirage. The points will be reached by applying patiently one by one the observations from the negligible dead—though there is a misguided poem in Greek that speaks of once the dead who left their city living and now the living who are burying their city. In one of Madame's immemorial letters she tells of a naughty little schoolboy who, when the chastening monks had raised his dress to spank him, was found to have on his small seat a painting

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of Our Lady; we can only hope that the Group will offer some such miracle upon the general critical discipline of their latest enterprise.

The story of "Big Night" tells of a party in the Tudor Terrace apartment of an advertising man. Schwartz is invited in the hope of getting a contract for the host's firm, and through the bait of a radio singer's presence. A rival advertising man and his wife arrive with Schwartz, all cheered with drinks, and the drinking goes on and on. The host's wife, a former model, has once rebuffed Schwartz's advances. On her husband's insistence she now favors him, completely, if somewhat torturedly. In the morning the husband gets the contract, the wife, resolved to leave, is asked by Schwartz to marry him and so get him into the Chicago clubs. All go away, the wife last, to try her own fortunes and the uses of her brains; the tart from the apartment upstairs remains in command.

The play itself has possibilities, but as it stands it is novelistic rather than dramatic. There is no use wasting time on the production that the Group gave it except to say that it was painstaking and that the result was not unlike one by unconvincing amateurs, all but Mr. Bromberg's Schwartz and Mr. Collins' singer. As you watched the performance you saw that the scenes had a sort of inch-by-inch, half-amateur realism without having any line of dramatic progression. Mr. Russell Collins, as the radio singer who came in to impress the supposed music magnate from Chicago, Schwartz, did a single, rounded and very neat moment, expert and witty. Miss Stella Adler understood what her role meant and had fair moments; but for the most part she seemed too querulous or disturbed within. She ended by being more personal and insistent than tragic; an impression of which we may say, as they do of blockades, that it is only legal when effective. Mr. J. Edward Bromberg gave one of the finest performances of the season so far. He was wholly convincing. His rhythm of Schwartz's deep emotion with regard to the host's wife, whom for all these years he had never been able to get out of his mind, was remarkable, as was the conveyance of sensitivity, coarseness and persistence, and that subtlety of perception and even delicate poetry and passionate fatality which marked off brilliantly the Jewish or Oriental of the character as distinguished from the Anglo-Saxon. Mr. Bromberg's series of emotional emphases alone was a lesson in theatre study.

Of Mr. Arthur Beckhard's happy production, "Goodbye Again," the impression is simpler. The play is based on American life, no doubt, since we have lecturing authors with secretaries visiting cities that are alike and meeting ladies out of the past or engaged with the lecturer's marketed novels. Certainly Mr. Beckhard's offering is based on the American objection to being bored; for the evening passes with hilarity and a striking absence of the season's habit of resentment, not to speak of a full house.

The story opens with the author asleep, his secretary answering calls on the telephone. He is to speak on the radio, to lecture, to meet people, and to hear when he awakes the name of a lady with whom once in a fit of collegiate romance beneath a memorial arch he forgot himself. The lady appears—cleverly cast, well played by Miss Katherine Squire for a vamping, unbudged idealism. She is now married; the author makes what he can of the situation, after remembering who she is; the secretary is left; the husband comes, not through jealous monsterism, but from a pleasant curiosity about this man of whom he has heard so much at home. The author does not reappear; perhaps he has lingered with his old friend, who was waiting for him after the lecture; the night passes, with the husband and the secretary dancing sometimes or listening to the radio, not thrilled, either of them. There is almost a divorce, augmented by the lady's solicitor brother-in-law's need for a case. The unemployment charities send quite a pleasant man to be a sort of defense or obstacle in the author's behalf, when the divorce parties shall meet the next morning; the man appears with his little boy, the visit a sort of tangent to the stroll they were taking. Everything comes out well enough; the husband is obliged to make the best of keeping his wife, whose romantic reserves he can neither soften nor penetrate, the author is left loving the secretary. But he has lied to her, and that has to be overcome. He does so by seeming to throw himself from one window, though only to appear at the other, having walked, like your literary trickster, on the ledge. The seeming danger brings the forgiveness needed for the final curtain; after all he is only a dear clever child (see all discussions of woman's super-intuition).

The play goes smoothly and is written with a good wink to its understanding, comedy eyes. It still needs working on. The beginning of the last act, for instance, drags, though that is partly due to the coy and leisurely enjoyment of his own performance that Mr. Osgood Perkins affords us. It is true that Mr. Perkins needs still to trim his sails a little more outward and to spare us a few plumes from his panache; but I know no other player Mr. Beckhard could have chosen who would have done the part better, unless, perhaps, he had had the good fortune to find someone who would have done it well. Miss Sally Bates did, under Mr. Beckhard's directing, the best playing I have ever seen her do, more flexible and persuasive and more varied. In two places she could improve her performance. In the first act she could show more delight in this childish author from whom she has to put up with so much. This would more easily convince us in the latter part of the play that he was worth bothering over and would make us happier in her happy ending. At the beginning of the third act, when she works at the desk, so studiously ignoring the author, she should project the meaning more, since there is no such thing as nothing on the stage, nothing must be created quite as much as something. Mr. Leslie Adams as the husband was all ease and wit; he presented a quality elusively his own and, without straining after art, worked—from within even more than from make-up—so well that I did not even think of his being the same actor that gave so good a performance as Mr. Nation some weeks ago. He was by all odds the best of the cast.

No little of all this is due to Mr. Beckhard. In three plays now, "Another Language," "Carry Nation" and "Goodbye Again," this new figure among our producers has succeeded. In two he was a success financially and in all of them, at least to an unusual extent, with regard to casting and a certain sincere approach and feeling for the theatre. Moreover he has had the impertinence to do this without an over-soul, or esthetic ideals and prophecies, or tendency

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to organize, or even to present himself as a personality, a specialist in foreign luminaries (often slightly stale in their own countries), a born gentleman stooping to the theatre, a meteoric playboy, a dreamer, seer or whatnot. At this rate Broadway will never understand him.

STARK YOUNG.

Not on the Ticker Tape

Soaking the Poor—Buy American—The Jones Bill—Wall Street Goes Missouri—Bank Reform Bills

WHETHER or not the latest blasts from the dying administration in favor of the sales tax can help the campaign is a debatable subject. In spite of Roosevelt's opposition to a general sales tax, it can be said that the issue is not yet dead.

It will come up again. On account of the opposition from such powerful sources as the farm groups and the American Federation of Labor, a subtle attempt may be made to reach the objectives of the sales tax without candidly letting the public know what is happening. The compromise may be in the form of many additional special sales taxes, instead of a general one. In this manner an attempt will be made to meet the criticism that the sales tax is a regressive tax—one which falls more heavily on the poorest classes than on the rich.

As a by-product of a study of consumer attitudes, the General Motors Corporation financed a survey investigating the political and economic views of 25,000 typical Americans. Those queried seemed satisfied with our existing form of government and our present organization of business, and blamed the people themselves for the depression. Those in the higher income brackets, who were most optimistic, correlated with those who were in a buying mood, thus giving some statistical basis for President Hoover's bizarre theory that you could improve business and employment by spreading sunshine talk.

The "Buy American" campaign, which evidently appeals to numerous emotional women shoppers, has been felt in the department stores. Merchants report a falling off of sales of Irish linens, French perfumes and numerous imported luxury items. Moreover, in the holiday season there was an unusual preference for toys "Made in America." If the economic nationalistic movement is to crystallize, doubtless new infant industries will spring up in this country.

The Jones bill embodies a significant departure from the pattern of the voluntary domestic-allotment plan. As it emerged from the House, it represented no consistent economic or political philosophy. Instead of being confined, as the leaders of the farm organizations wanted, to basic crops with exportable surpluses, it also included, for purely log-rolling reasons, peanuts and rice. Likewise, it included dairy products, which have not been so far out of line with industrial prices as wheat, cotton, hogs and tobacco.

Even the more intelligent business leaders in the East, including H. I. Harriman, of Boston, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, Owen D. Young, Bernard M. Baruch and Orlando Weber, president of the Allied Chemical and Dye Corporation, recognize that governmental intervention is necessary to restore farmer buying power, but the bill in its present form has departed far from the experiment which President-elect Roosevelt endorsed. However, some important Democrats appear to think that the present bill, which is subject to amendment in the Senate, is better than no farm relief at all. It is safe to say, however, that President Hoover will veto the bill provided it is laid on his table.

In Wall Street the practical significance of the Kreuger and Toll episode lies in the fact that the Stock Exchange has now required audited reports from all companies seeking to list securities. About 20 percent of the companies whose shares are already listed are exempt from this requirement, but Frank Altschul significantly pointed out before the Norbeck Committee that it might become necessary to remove the securities of such backward companies from the list. Ivar Kreuger was able to make suckers out of the Stock Exchange, out of the New York bankers as well as out of American investors, by avoiding any check-up of his figures by certified public accountants.

Throughout the country, comparatively drowsy financial institutions have been gaining at the expense of the high-pressure boys. In New York, for example, one bank began to lay the groundwork for such a trend while the boom was on. It pushed in its advertising the slogan "No Securities for Sale." Then when the prolonged depression came, its sales force, in offering trust services, was able to win over accounts from high-pressure institutions with security affiliates, whose offerings had gone sour. The results in terms of new business have been remarkable. Similar phenomena are observable throughout the country.

Insurance companies have been capitalizing the depression by touting annuities. Logically, annuities are much less attractive now than they were during the boom, for the annuitant puts in extremely dear dollars with the probability that in future years he will take out much cheaper ones.

Bank-reform legislation at Washington has been impeded by differences of opinion in the two houses of Congress. The Senate favors the Glass omnibus bill, and the House leans toward guarantee of bank deposits. As long as there are two banking jurisdictions, federal and state, the Glass reforms can be evaded unless accompanied by similar changes in state banking legislation. Mr. Broderick in New York, recognizing this, has suggested a program of parallel reforms for state banking. Since New York sets the fashions for the rest of the nation in bank legislation, it would be genuinely significant if the legislature would act affirmatively on Mr. Broderick's recommendations. In previous years, the legislature has turned thumbs down on his recommendations affecting commercial banks. But now perhaps the bankers' lobby is less effectual.

L. M. N.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Profit and Surplus Value

SIR: In his review of Professor Fairchild's "Profits or Prosperity" in The New Republic of January 11, 1933, Mr. Lawrence Dennis tells us that profit, in the author's sense, consists of that portion of the product which is left after the payment of rent, interest and wages. This, of course, is the sense in which the word profit is commonly used. But Mr. Dennis adds: "Marx called it surplus value. When taken collectively, it may be thought of quite simply as the net savings of the community." Mr. Dennis is wrong. Marx's surplus value includes rent, interest and profit; it is the portion of the product left over after the payment of wages and the deduction of that part of the "constant capital" which has been absorbed by the new product. Profit is calculated on the total capital; surplus value, only on the "variable capital," or wages. Mr. Dennis is also wrong in his notion that surplus value represents net savings, whether of the individual capitalist or of the collective capital of a given society, for out of the surplus value comes the personal expenditure, or "revenue," of the capitalist. According to Marx, "one portion [of the surplus value] is consumed by the capitalist as revenue, the other is employed as capital, is accumulated."

New York City. HERMAN SIMPSON.

Professor Fisher's Stamped Scrip

SIR: In your issue of December 21, Professor Irving Fisher claims that the lame-duck Congress can "cover itself with glory by pulling us out of the depression in a few weeks." The idea is to pay for public works with fiduciary dollar bills, to which a two-cent stamp must be affixed each week. After fifty-two weeks, receipts from stamps will redeem the bill at par, plus four cents for printing and administration.

As Professor Fisher once knew, the basic fallacy of such devices was noted by Aristophanes, and well stated by Sir Thomas Gresham, Queen Elizabeth's financier. In 1911, Professor Fisher himself restated Gresham's Law, thus: *"Cheap money will drive out dear money,"* adding: "If the initiative and choice lay principally with the person who receives, instead of the person who pays the money, the opposite would hold true."

The fact, argued in its favor, that stamped scrip would circulate rapidly, being too expensive to keep, is precisely what gives it the character of cheap money. In "The Purchasing Power of Money," Professor Fisher says, "It cannot be too strongly emphasized that, in any balance sheet, the value of the liabilities rests on that of the assets." Thus the true *value* of stamped scrip at any moment will be that of the stamps already affixed. It will be cheap money, compared with greenbacks, until it gets its last stamp. If this needs proving, consider United States bonds, similarly backed only by the promise of redemption from future taxes. A year ago Treasury 3's sold for $82.30, depreciated, not because anyone doubted their redemption, but because (as with stamped scrip) it would be inconvenient to hold them until the due date.

For the same reason, stamped scrip would pass always at a discount unless it were made legal tender, in which case Gresham's Law would operate to drive out greenbacks in a sum total probably approximating that of the scrip issue. We would get no expansion of buying power, only the added burden on trade of an arbitrary 2-percent sales tax to finance unnecessary "public improvements."

In practice, the banks would pay the tax. The afternoon before the day specified each week for affixing new stamps, merchants would deposit all their stamped scrip, and would use greenbacks, hoarded all week, to tide them over the crisis. The banks could not pass the scrip out again until they themselves had paid the tax. And how long does Professor Fisher think the banks would continue to pay a tax of 104 percent per annum on a large part of their deposits? What else could they do, if stamped scrip were made legal tender? And what good would stamped scrip be if it were not?

Hanover, N. H. ALEXANDER LAING.

Students against War

SIR: Can students of widely different political complexions who are sincerely opposed to war unite upon a minimum program of opposition to war? This, perhaps, was the most important question raised and answered at the National Student Congress Against War held recently at the University of Chicago.

About seven hundred delegates from colleges in twenty-six states wrestled with the problem. They were Socialists, Communists, hundred-percent pacifists, Green Shirts, some affiliated with student or political organizations, some unattached. Each delegate represented at least fifteen students on his home campus, the entire representation totaling some 10,000 students.

Although the Congress was more than once threatened by a split or "walk-out" on the part of disaffected elements, the final result was a united front, a common program and a permanent organization. An hour after the first session it looked as if the Congress might die a miserable and ignominious death—the victim of Communist and Socialist factions, with the pacifists standing by. An hour before the last session matters looked even blacker. These were two points of tension that were happily submerged by the achievement of unity. There can be little doubt that the Congress accomplished all of its purposes, despite minor defects detected by its severest critics. It has proved itself worthy of Professor George S. Counts's statement issued prior to the Congress:

> The National Student Congress Against War represents one of the most important developments among the students of the United States. It suggests that American students, like the students of other lands, are beginning to exhibit genuine interest in social and political affairs.

Brooklyn, New York City. M. B. SCHNAPPER.

An Appeal from Tom Mooney

SIR: The letter recently sent to the Governor of California by fifteen famous Americans has dramatically accelerated the fight for my freedom. This new support follows the unofficial publication of the suppressed Wickersham Report on my case which was buried for more than a year by President Hoover in the vaults of the White House. This new and startling revelation of my frame-up by an official government commission should help arouse public sentiment.

On the basis of the facts stated in the letter I have mentioned, which tears into shreds the framed-up decision against my pardon, I have made a public demand for a new trial. My attorneys are taking legal steps necessary to bring me to trial on an old indictment. Originally there were eight indictments. I was tried and convicted on one; six were dismissed against my will; and one remains, at my request, on the calendar of the superior court of San Francisco.

It is vital that I be brought to trial and given a chance to prove my innocence. No court has ever considered the proofs obtained after my conviction, that all the witnesses against me were perjurors, and that I am absolutely innocent. Dependent as I am on the support of my friends, I cannot possibly go ahead without contributions to defray the heavy expenses involved.

After seventeen years of mental and physical torture, after having stood in the shadow of the gallows, there looms through the blackness of my dungeon where I am buried alive, a ray of light—a gleam of hope. Please don't let it die. If my plans fail now, there is no telling when I will have another chance to leave here alive. There is a possibility at this time of forcing the courts and the Governor to act, if the aroused and aggressive mass pressure of public opinion for my pardon is crystallized immediately. The real battle is ahead of us!

I make this desperate appeal to you for immediate help. Mail your response to the Tom Mooney Defense Committee, P. O. Box 1475, San Francisco, Calif.

San Quentin, Calif. TOM MOONEY, 31921.

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The Sea Jacobins

The History of Piracy, by Philip Gosse. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 363 pages. $3.50.

PIRACY through the ages is not a subject which can be well treated in a single volume: it is at once too complicated and too simple. By definition, a pirate is merely a sea robber, "one who by open violence takes the property of another on the high seas." But the nature of violence, of property and of sea-borne traffic changes from century to century and culture to culture. Piracy as it flourishes in a young society, like that of the Homeric Greeks or the early Norsemen, is of a different essence from the sea pilfering that is tolerated by a nation no longer able to enforce order, like the nineteenth-century Chinese. The English pirates of the feudal age bear little resemblance to their successors under capitalism. Common to the pirates of all periods and cultures there are only the swift vessel, the merciless attack, the looting, the riotous days on shore till the loot is spent, the end by disease or shipwreck, hemp or steel, the sort of details preserved in old woodcuts. And the present volume, confined of necessity to such episodes, is essentially a woodcut narrative of pirates.

This is not to say that the book is valueless. Mr. Philip Gosse, son of Sir Edmund, is a scholar in his own right and "the foremost collector in Great Britain of pirate literature," as witness the six-page bibliography. Nobody else has written a broader survey of the subject, or gathered together a greater store of quaintness, braggadocio, treachery and death by water. "The History of Piracy" begins with the sea robbers who captured and were crucified by Julius Caesar; it ends with an account of vessels taken off the South China coast in very recent years. The intervening chapters are devoted to pirates of every type, the Barbary corsairs, the Dunkirk privateers, the buccaneers of the Caribbean, the Joasmees of the Persian Gulf, the Dyaks of Borneo. But all these rascals are pictured against a background empty of social meaning. They have no complicated human motives: they murder and rob for the mere sake of robbery and murder. They are equally picturesque, quaint, romantic and, in the end, monotonous.

Exception must be made for the chapters describing the English pirates of the early eighteenth century. It is easy to understand, moreover, why these should be more interesting. The image of piracy stamped on the public mind is, in reality, that of the year 1720: the word "pirate" evokes a man in the costume of that period, knee breeches, a long dirty embroidered coat with a brace of pistols stuck in the belt, a plumed hat tilted over an old wig matted with blood and wine—clothes such as Bartholomew Roberts wore, or Long Ben Avery, or Edward England. When speaking of these famous captains and their crews, the most pedestrian scholar is a little inspired and the drabbest style assumes color and movement. Yet even here Mr. Gosse is less illuminating than his principal source book: Charles Johnson's "General History of Pyrates," published in 1724, is rich in material which modern historians have overlooked. So too is Captain Snelgrave's "Adventures on the Guinea Coast."

The truth, as we can learn from Johnson and Snelgrave, is that the eighteenth-century gentlemen of fortune were really Jacobins of the sea. With a few exceptions like Stede Bonnet and William Kidd, they were not gentlemen by birth, or even the sons of merchants. They were, for the most part, common sailors rebelling against low pay, short rations, high-flavored beef, flour in which the worms were past counting, the cat-o'-nine-tails, irons, dysentery, scurvy, all the hardships and brutalities which made their death rate even higher than that of the Negroes they carried from the Guinea Coast to the West Indies. Piracy was a blind popular uprising, a jacquerie directed against sea captains and merchants, almost a slave revolt.

Its character is clearly shown in the articles signed by recruits when they entered a pirate vessel and submitted themselves to the constitution of the pirate state. Food and strong liquors were shared in common, each man receiving all he could eat or drink except in case of scarcity. All booty was equally divided. Men injured in action received compensation at a rate somewhat higher than that fixed by state insurance boards in this country. No boy or woman could be taken on board the vessel: "If any Man were found seducing any of the latter sex, and carried her to sea, disguised, he was to suffer Death." To preserve discipline in time of battle, the pirates had a captain—usually chosen over a bowl of punch—but they claimed "that it was not of any great signification who was dignify'd with Title; for really and in Truth, all good Governments had (like theirs) the supream Power lodg'd with the Community, who might doubtless depute and revoke as suited Interest or Humour. . . . Should a Captain be so sawcy as to exceed Prescription at any time, *why down with Him!* it will doubtless be a Caution after he is dead to his Successors."

The captain received a double share of booty; he lodged alone in the great cabin, and sometimes was voted small parcels of plate and china; but he really commanded the vessel only in hours of danger. It is true that bolder captains, like Blackbeard or Roberts, tried to maintain strict discipline. To guard against their being "so sawcy as to exceed Prescription," the pirates chose a second officer, the quartermaster, who, like a Roman tribune of the people, had the right of veto over the captain's orders. Only the quartermaster was allowed to inflict punishment, and he was usually careful not to inflict it frequently. The pirates, by conviction, were primitive anarchists. Their "articles," brewed over a punch bowl on a deck from which the bloodstains were never washed, reflected a spirit of desperate utopianism, a desire to build a commonwealth free from the tyranny of "base Merchants and cruel Commanders of Ships."

But the nature of piracy at this period is still more clearly shown by the general support it received from the common sailors. Though the death rate among the gentlemen of fortune was incredibly high—though their average expectation of life was less than six months—they had no trouble finding recruits. Captain Snelgrave tells how his slaving vessel, having sixteen guns and forty-eight men on board, was attacked in April, 1719, by a pirate longboat with a crew of twelve. The pirates explained their rashness by saying that "they depended on the same good fortune as in the other Ships they had taken; having met with no resistance: For the People were generally glad of an opportunity of entering with them."

"Which last," adds Snelgrave, "was but too true."

Almost their first question on capturing a vessel was whether any of the men had complaints against their captain. Luckily Snelgrave was a just commander. If he had flogged any of his people, the pirates might have served him as the cruel Captain Skinner was served the year before: they tied him to the mainmast, pelted him with broken bottles, unloosed his bonds, whipped him round

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the deck, and finally granted him the mercy of a bullet in the head. Such stories spread rapidly among the beaten, half-starved seamen. Edward England, in the spring of 1719, captured nine small vessels off the Windward Coast, and more than a third of the sailors signed the pirate articles. A whole crew sometimes mutinied at the first rumor of an approaching pirate. Wherever the black flag was raised, the hatred between officers and men burst into open warfare.

These facts raise a serious question. Considering the wrongs of English sailors, their eagerness to revolt, the rich booty to be taken, the weak policing of the seas, the willingness of the king's officers to be bribed with a bolt of muslin and a handful of doubloons—why did the pirates let themselves be suppressed? There were empty shores and fertile valleys in the West Indies, Central America, Madagascar. Why didn't the pirates abandon sea robbery and become colonists? Why didn't they found a country of their own, beyond the shadow of the gallows?

One answer—it may not be final—lies in the failure of the pirates to develop a philosophy or free themselves of the religious ideas imposed on them by the ruling class. In the midst of their revolt, they still believed in the God of Bristol merchants and slaving captains. They were damned in God's eyes for their sins, and "Very well," they said, "let us all be damned." "In the Commonwealth of Pyrates," wrote Charles Johnson, himself a former gentlemen of fortune, "he who goes the greatest Length of Wickedness, is looked upon with a kind of Envy amongst them, as a Person of a most extraordinary Gallantry." Admitting that they were men deprived of virtue, they revenged themselves by turning the Bristol virtues upside down, and exalting those pirates who were most unchaste, unthrifty and continually drunken.

Sober men, as a matter of fact, were suspected of treachery; on some vessels it was a crime for a man to drink small beer. Blackbeard's journal, taken after his death, had entries of this nature: "Such a Day, Rum all out:—our Company somewhat sober:—A damn'd Confusion amongst us!—Rogues a-plotting;—great Talk of Separation.—So I look'd sharp for a Prize;—such a Day took one, with a great deal of Liquor on Board, so kept the Company hot, damned hot, then all Things went well again." And Captain Snelgrave says, describing the capture of his vessel: "They hoisted upon Deck a great many half Hogsheads of *Claret* and *French Brandy;* knock'd their Heads out, and dipp'd Canns and Bowls into them to drink out of: And in their Wantonness threw full buckets of each sort upon one another. As soon as they had emptied what was on the Deck, they hoisted up more: And in the evening washed the Decks with what remained in the Casks. . . . They made such Waste and Destruction, that I am sure a numerous set of such Villains would in a short time, have ruined a great City."

It was the wastefulness of the pirates rather than their debaucheries which outraged William Snelgrave. He had to watch in silence while all his property was destroyed—first his liquors, then his personal wardrobe, then his watch, which he was forced to hand over to the pirate quartermaster, who asked the time as a gentlemanly hint. The man laid it on the deck and gave it a kick, "saying, 'It was a pretty Foot-ball.'" The cargo of the vessel had already been ruined. Bales were broken open, a few articles taken, and everything else tossed into the river. All the fowls disappeared in the first stew. Beef and biscuits went overboard and money was squandered ashore, among the black prostitutes and traders. Though the pirates had, within two weeks, taken eleven sail, and though each vessel carried provisions enough to feed three hundred slaves on the long voyage to the West Indies, they were nearly starving by the end of the month. And this was a common experience. In their drunkenness they wasted provisions, forgot to fill the water casks and later, in mid-ocean, they would be reduced to a gill of water for each man, with a couple of moldy biscuits.

Most things they destroyed wantonly, but books they pursued with a special hatred. Snelgrave had two large chestsful, both of which disappeared. He was told that one of the pirates swore upon finding them that "there was Jaw-work enough (as he called it) to serve a Nation, and proposed they might be cast into the Sea; for he feared, there might be some Books amongst them, that might breed Mischief enough; and prevent some of their Comrades from going on in their Voyage to Hell, whither they were all bound."

It was the common conviction of the pirates that all of them were bound for Hell. We may not unreasonably conjecture that the image of God was confused in their mind with that of the ship's captain. Having rebelled against the latter, having signed, as they said, "a Declaration of War against the whole World," they believed that they were also rebels against God. This belief would explain an interesting feature of pirate life, a sort of naïve Satanism resembling that of the Middle Ages. Blackbeard, for example, tried to make his men believe that he was a devil incarnate; "for being one Day at Sea, and a little flushed with drink:—*Come,* says he, *let us make a Hell of our own, and try how long we can bear it;* accordingly he, with two or three others, went down into the Hold, and closing up all the Hatches, filled several Pots full of Brimstone, and other combustible Matter, and set it on Fire, and so continued till they were almost suffocated."

Snelgrave observed a similar incident on Howel Davis's vessel, the "King James," where he had been invited to sup with the three pirate captains. There were a hundred and fifty men on board, most of them drunk, in addition to fifty prisoners. A Negro was sent into the hold with a lighted candle to draw some rum. He let a spark fall into the bunghole; the rum caught fire and the head of the hogshead flew out "with a report equal to that of a small Cannon." There was great confusion on board the vessel, with the sober men trying to escape in the darkness and the drunkards looking on stupidly. Only Snelgrave and a few others attempted to put out the fire; it was now licking at the door of the magazine, which contained above thirty thousand pounds of powder. Meanwhile, in the midst of the tumult, Snelgrave heard "a loud shout upon the Main-deck, with a Huzza, *For a brave blast to go to Hell with,* which was repeated several times."

Often the devil worship of the pirates gave way to Christian repentance. Snelgrave, during the last days of his captivity, was asked to visit the pirate quartermaster, a victim of African fever. The sick man confessed that he had intended to murder Snelgrave on capturing his vessel, and begged forgiveness. He further said, "That he had been a most wicked Wretch, having been guilty of all manner of abominable Crimes; and that now believing he should die, his Conscience sadly tormented him, fearing he should be punished, as he deserved, in Hell-fire, which so often in their vile discourse he had made light of."

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Snelgrave tried to reconcile him with God; but "the Quarter-master that evening falling into a Delirium, died before morning in terrible Agonies; cursing his Maker in so shocking a manner, that it made a great Impression on several new entered Men."

During the month which Snelgrave spent among the pirates, his captors were dying off like grasshoppers on a frosty night. They died of disease, blackwater fever, scurvy, dysentery, syphilis; they died of wounds or drunken accidents or delirium tremens. One of the three pirate vessels, that commanded by La Bouche, was later lost in a storm off the coast of Madagascar with 250 men on board (pirate seamanship being deficient, such accidents were frequent). The second vessel, commanded by Cocklyn, simply disappeared from history; perhaps it was destroyed by an explosion like that so narrowly averted on the "St. James." The crew of this third vessel, commanded by Howel Davis, had the longest career; it cruised the seas until February, 1722. By this time, however, the crew had a new captain, Bartholomew Roberts, and a new vessel, the "Royal Fortune." Howel Davis was dead, as were all but six of the men who had sailed with him into the river of Sierra Leone three years before.

The real answer to our question, why the pirates disappeared so quickly, is that their aimless rebellion ended by suppressing itself. Very few of them lived long enough to face the broadside of a British man of war. In such conflicts, the records show that the pirates were rarely victorious, even though they were superior in men and guns. They fought with a curious apathy, being defeated in advance by their own conscience, by the voice of organized society speaking within them. And they went to the gallows repentant or in a drunken stupor—like Bartholomew Roberts' men, fifty-two of them, a full pack, hanged on the beach below Cape Coast Castle.

There is, however, the record of one pirate captain who was not only a rebel but also, by philosophy, a thoroughgoing communist. Fréderic Misson was a Frenchman of good family, a midshipman on the frigate "la Victoire." While his ship was lying in the harbor of Naples, he made a trip to Rome which changed the whole course of his life. For he was outraged, as Luther had been before him, by the dissolute manners of the Italian priests and began to entertain doubts of revealed religion. While he was in this disposition, he discovered that his father confessor was a deist like himself. Caraccioli was his name, a young man of dissolute habits, fierce dreams and revolutionary determination. He left his frock behind him, donned a red waistcoat and a tricorn, and went to sea on Misson's frigate.

Mr. Gosse, who repeats the story without understanding its importance, tells how the two of them took command of "la Victoire" after a sea fight in which the captain was killed. The men, whom they had converted to deism and communism, supported them in their decision to cruise the Caribbean, not with a black flag, but under a white ensign as "guardians of the People's Rights and Liberties." After taking many rich prizes, but harming no one, and setting free all the slaves they captured, Misson and Caraccioli set sail for Madagascar. Here, in alliance with a Yankee pirate named Thomas Tew, they founded the utopian colony of Libertatia. An equal division was made of cattle and tools. The gold and rough diamonds which they had in great abundance were put into a common chest and left almost without guard, for no man coveted this treasure. A strong fort was built and manned with guns. The leaders, as they rested after their day's toil, would dream of a great democratic empire, founded by pirates and ruled for the people.

But the dream was shattered quickly enough. Tew, on a voyage northward, lost his vessel with three hundred men on board; he was the only survivor. During his absence, the natives attacked the fort and massacred the colonists; Caraccioli the philosopher was slain, and Misson escaped with a bare remnant of forty-five. When he met Tew, he declared his intention of revenging the destruction of Libertatia on the whole world. Fourteen men followed him on this venture. The diamonds and gold having been divided, Tew sailed off with thirty-four others. He was still within gunshot of Misson's sloop when it overturned in a sudden squall, and carried to the bottom the last trace of that pirate republic whose laws, ninety years in advance, foreshadowed the most visionary projects of the French Revolution.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

A Gallery of Miniatures

Appleton Biographies: Voltaire, by Andre Maurois; Julius Caesar, by John Buchan; Marlborough, by Sir John Fortescue; Leonardo Da Vinci, by Clifford Bax; Mozart, by Sacheverell Sitwell; Akbar, by Laurence Binyon; St. Paul, by Wilfred Knox; Lenin, by James Maxton. Each with a portrait frontispiece. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $2 each.

THESE books average about thirty thousand words apiece, whereas the usual wordage for a biography is somewhere between seventy thousand and a quarter of a million—not to mention mammoths like Irving's "Washington" or Carlyle's "Cromwell" or "Frederick the Great." As I looked over these well printed and securely bound volumes several questions occurred to me. Have the eight eminent authors, whether by deliberation or chance, profited by their limitation of words to develop a new literary form? Are these volumes intended to be popularizations of knowledge like the Home University Library or, presuming that the popular taste for biography lingers, are they in their field what novelettes are to full-fashioned novels? Are they merely the usual biographies with the details left out? Do they indicate any new direction in taste, a return to hero worship, a decline in psychoanalysis or a new understanding and use of the economic background in the careers of great individuals?

To all of these questions each of the eight biographers returns a different answer. Maurois' "Voltaire" is done with such finish as to answer the first question affirmatively. It is by no means a masterpiece, but it is so carefully, concisely and neatly written that it points to a new literary form of which clear and concise writers like M. Maurois will be masters. This form would be analogous to the miniature in painting, omitting nothing but making the lines of the portrait sharper and more delicate.

On the other hand Clifford Bax's "Leonardo Da Vinci" would seem an equally successful example of a new form based on another principle entirely. Mr. Bax confronts Leonardo as an enigma which it is the biographer's duty to unriddle. (Since all human personality is enigmatic, the method would apply to any biography.) Before putting pen to paper Mr. Bax had pondered his enigma and found an answer, with the help of Dr. Freud and Mrs. Rachel Annand Taylor's valuable book, "Leonardo the Florentine." The process of writing then became for Mr. Bax a matter of arrangement and selection of data to prove his con-

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clusion. He does so very ably with charm and reasonableness, and the astounding contradictions of Leonardo's life, instead of being shrugged off as paradoxes, fit perfectly into the pattern laid out by Mr. Bax's explanation. Such a method is, because of its formal virtues, quite perfect when it is successful. But it is a fatal form in failure; for if an author using it should happen to arrive at the wrong conclusion there would be nothing in his work worth salvaging.

In the midst of reading these eight short biographies, I turned to Plutarch to see how he had managed, since his "Lives" took about the same space or less. Plutarch is successful, in this form, beyond the hope of any modern biographer. But his success lies not only in his own excellences, which it is conceivable that other writers may equal, but in a set of historical conditions which may never again be matched. The Greco-Roman world from which he took his subjects was relatively small and had a unified body of traditions. With these the literate public would be familiar. Plutarch could work therefore with all the economy that the use of allusions permits. Civilization has so vastly enlarged in time and space that biographers today must spend much of their labor on historical settings which, in themselves, bar the intimacy that is so remarkable a characteristic of Plutarch's work.

The Bax and the Maurois volumes come closest to being books worth attention in their own right. The others are jobs quite well done, adequate short biographies whose brevity is achieved mainly by the omission of detail. The "Lenin" is the most important, since it describes the career and achievement of the man who played the chief part in the greatest social and political creation of our time. It is especially valuable for being set in relation to the international Socialist movement, for the career of Lenin cannot be understood apart from it. The "Marlborough" is conventional homage to a great general, and is so gorged with victories and so absorbed in nationalist narcissism that no attention is paid to the social and economic backgrounds of the wars that Marlborough fought. Sacheverell Sitwell's "Mozart" is very dainty writing, fitting to the subject and the period. The biographical part is interesting, but almost half the volume is devoted to a literary description of the most interesting pieces of Mozart's music; and these descriptions, sensitive and intelligent though they are, quickly lose point without a phonograph beside the reader. In the end they serve merely to remind one that the only really satisfying description of music is a musical performance.

The "Julius Caesar," by John Buchan, is a good job. Its social and economic settings are effectively drawn; but Buchan fails to point out that the class war which Caesarism seemed to solve was merely ignored. The imperial umpire who presumably kept the classes from persecuting each other ended by oppressing both; the working classes were defeated and sank into serfdom. Mr. Binyon's "Akbar" is a vivid biography of the brilliant, untiring Mogul emperor, the royal illiterate whose court became a lyceum for philosophers from everywhere, the skeptic who attempted to found a reasonable world religion, the bloody warrior who became a vegetarian. It is, however, too exclusively a dynastic biography. There is little of the India that Akbar conquered and less of the Indian people; and because of this lack the exceptional merits of Akbar as a ruler do not become apparent. Mr. Knox's "St. Paul," though somewhat dull, is a satisfactory piece of work, particularly in revealing the process by which Christianity evolved from a minor Jewish sect into a new world religion.

Do these volumes show any tendency in biography? Not one of them is iconoclastic, not one of them is ironic. With the exception of Maurois, whose admiration of his subject is politely concealed, all the writers are wholeheartedly reverent toward their heroes. Mr. Bax is the only one, and he somewhat apologetically, to acknowledge the help of psychoanalysis, and Mr. Maxton the only one to go deeply into economic causes. Of the eight only Maurois, Bax and Sitwell contrive to give us an intimate sense of personality, and it is significant that their subjects are all artists, men given to the cultivation of personality. The truth is that when we quarrel with the biographer of a public man for not giving us a sense of his personality, we ask him to furnish something that is missing or at least atrophied. We forget that one of the sacrifices a public man makes to his position is a sacrifice of private life and those avocations and individual liberties by which personality is shaped. Lenin's great strength of will and richness of character flowed straight into the activities of his party; the private life of Marlborough is reduced to his uxorious love of Rachel; Caesar for most of his career was merely a great opportunist; St. Paul, traveling from congregation to congregation, had no opportunities for a private life; Akbar, absolute monarch, was not an integrated individual; we see him struggling to achieve a personality. Great public men are those who have fitted a spectacular opportunity and a great task; and their biographies become the description of a great performance rather than of a great actor.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

The Nation without Friends

Can America Stay at Home? by Frank H. Simonds. New York: Harper and Brothers. 387 pages. $3.

AS YOU might guess, Mr. Simonds's answer to the question, "Can America stay at home?" is, "No." We are an exporting and creditor nation; these are advantages we do not wish to lose. It is important for us to have a foreign policy and, since Europe is our largest customer and the scene of our chief foreign investments, the major objective of our policy necessarily ought to be the creation of European stability and peace. Woodrow Wilson sought to achieve this end by what Mr. Simonds calls the "policy of internationalism," which meant, in practice, the rearrangement of most of Europe's frontiers, and their guarantee, under Articles X and XVI of the League Covenant, by the economic and military force of the United States. This solution was furiously rejected by the American electorate. Harding and Coolidge adopted a "policy of isolation," which was completely spurious, since under their administrations we sponsored the Washington and first Geneva disarmament conferences, and the Dawes and Young Plans. Mr. Hoover has attempted a "policy of interference," which has accomplished nothing and has made us heartily disliked.

Mr. Simonds does not offer a comprehensive program of his own. He is, with great justification, a thoroughgoing pessimist about the international situation. "European passions," by which Mr. Simonds means Germany's determination to rearm, unite with Austria and modify the Polish boundary, make the establishment of any durable system of peace in Europe impossible. The most that can be hoped for is a sort of truce, to be imposed by force through the medium of the League by the "satisfied" powers, England and France, upon the revisionist powers, Germany, Italy and Soviet Russia. We in this country are

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unalterably opposed to assuming any of the military obligations of the Covenant. But we might agree in advance—and here is Mr. Simonds's one positive proposal—in the event of a League war to waive our neutral rights, and bind ourselves not to have economic relations with the aggressor nations. This is, of course, the substance of the so-called Capper Resolution, now awaiting action by the Senate.

The interest of Mr. Simonds's book, however, is not in his own proposals, but in his brilliant, usually devastating, analyses of the proposals of others. Mr. Simonds is beginning to occupy in this country much the same position that is held in England by Mr. Wickham Steed (to whom the present book is, incidentally, dedicated) and by Professor Jaretwohl, and in France by MM. Lauzanne, Sauerwein and "Pertinax." No prudent Englishman or Frenchman ever dreams of accepting a governmental pronouncement on foreign policy at face value, as we once accepted Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, and the independent critic of diplomatic policy has long had an established place in English and French life. The recent great and increasing popularity of Mr. Simonds's books in this country is, perhaps, proof that the period of America's international unsophistication is almost over, and that we are beginning, although somewhat reluctantly and embarrassedly, to think of ourselves as the citizens of a great and dangerous world power.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

Lonely America, by Lothrop Stoddard. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 372 pages. $2.50.

NOT IN so many words, but in effect, this book is a call to the American people to arm themselves against a world of enemies. "America," we are told, "is today preëminent as the nation which is at once the most feared, hated, envied and despised." We are told of the lurid things that would happen to us if we were conquered, and we are solemnly assured that "this is not scare-mongering." Passing the world in review, Mr. Stoddard finds that Europe is inclined to combine against us, South America distrusts and fears us, while Japan—poor, proud, drunk with the strong wine of a conquering imperialism, armed to the teeth—is eager to pounce upon us. The British Dominions—not Great Britain—are our only friends. Russia might indeed be our friend, for our interests and Russia's clash nowhere, but Russia represents the "communist menace." He admits that normal relations between us and the Soviet Union would lead to increased trade and employment, but "recognition would spell a decidedly undignified backdown by our government from the stand it has consistently maintained."

Mr. Stoddard is a well informed student of international affairs, and he insists above all on the necessity of a realistic attitude in these affairs. But multiplying armaments and preparing for war against a world of enemies—is that a realistic policy? Assuming that Mr. Stoddard's analysis is correct, it would seem that the first business of a realistic statesmanship is to break through the enemy ring, to turn possible enemies into friends. Richelieu was a realistic statesman, and he subsidized Protestant princes, and formed alliances with them even while he was fighting Protestantism in France. Bismarck was a realistic statesman, and he toppled over thrones even while he was a divine-right monarchist in Prussia; he also turned his worst enemy—the Hapsburg monarchy—into an ally. Mussolini and Mustapha Kemal—but why multiply instances? Mr. Stoddard, who prides himself on his realism, is at heart a doctrinaire.

HERMAN SIMPSON.

Cross Country

Folksay IV, edited by B. A. Botkin. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press. 297 pages. $3.

NO SHORT stories appear among the forty or more contributions to the 1932 "Folksay." This omission alone is a dazzling achievement. Instead of variations on that most artful form, there are poems, a play, sketches, monologues, chronicles, remembrances. Unstudied outlines are traditional with us for folk materials, and here they are both freshly accepted and subtly fulfilled. Erskine Caldwell's prime "The People's Choice" might have come out of an old collection of Southwestern humor except for minor differences in lingo, and it is told as it would be spoken. Jean Thomas has used her unsentimentalized gift for rendering Kentucky mountain people in a tale that might have been exchanged for another of the same kind on a country road. In "The Codder," by William Cunningham, a natural resting place is found for that highly favored story of the corn country about the hailstorm, the chicken and the ice cream; it begins with some tall talk, and all of this is set down with apparent carelessness, yet the whole is drawn together by a final trenchancy of feeling.

Not all the pieces show this trenchancy. With new, rich materials a few writers exhibit that showiness often attributed to the newly rich, here apparent mainly in matters of profanity and physiology. A few achieve only broken contours. Almost every piece gains by its place among others. The whole becomes much greater than the parts, evoking a startling consciousness of widely spaced, interrelated forms of native existence. In the end an obscure people emerges, with their talk, the lands they look upon, fragments of their history, something of the fate to which they are committed. In almost every sense in which the word can be applied, "Folksay" is collective. The covering inscription, "The Land Is Ours," becomes proletarian or poetic, as you like.

Two narratives, "The Burden of Summer," by Paul Horgan, and "Slough Country," by Robert Webb, belong naturally to this sequence and enlarge it, yet each stands apart by virtue of a singularly profound emotion. "The Burden of Summer" is a most moving portrait of old age. The style is stately, and may be considered too stately for the homely theme, but perhaps it is a fallacy to suppose that style and theme must be in simple accord. In "Slough Country" Robert Webb has done something quietly magical with wet bottom lands, a man, his dogs and a gun.

CONSTANCE ROURKE.

Book Notes

BIOGRAPHY

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS: "Old Man Eloquent," by Bennett Champ Clark. *Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 437 pages. $3.75.*

It was characteristic of John Quincy Adams to document his own career so thoroughly, so exhaustively, as to frighten away biographers: he customarily carried virtue to excess. So monumental an *apologia*, so extensive a correspondence, so elaborate an official record, did Adams leave behind him that no student has yet possessed the hardihood or industry to essay a definitive biography. Senator Clark specifically disclaims such an attempt, but he has given us the fullest and most satisfactory account of Adams' career and the justest interpretation of his character that we have. It is something of an accomplishment for the son of that frontier democrat, Champ Clark, to comprehend and appreciate the peculiar

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virtues of the crusty old New Englander, but Mr. Clark confesses that "despite certain repellent personal traits, in spaciousness of comprehension, in rugged courage, in disinterested patriotism, in the versatility of talents, and in the ultimate value of services to his country, Adams is entitled to a place among America's very great." Senator Clark's biography is remarkably complete, accurate and well balanced: if it lacks the picturesqueness of Bowers or the incisiveness of Beveridge it has a certain judicial quality of its own. The account of Adams' scientific and literary interests leaves something to be desired, and a more realistic and impartial analysis of the application of the Gag Rule would add to the scholarly value of the work.

HISTORY

BATH, by Edith Sitwell. *New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. 288 pages, illustrated. $3.50.*

In her pageant of Bath, Edith Sitwell does not confine her culled scenes merely to the dazzling, decorous reign of gamester Nash, self-appointed arbiter of elegance. She begins her show 836 years before Christ when Baldub, leprous swineherd and banished heir-apparent to the throne of Lud Hudibras, strayed unclean into the muddy waters of one of Bath's springs and came out miraculously cured. However, from the entrance of the Beau in 1702, the spotlight shines resplendently upon him whether he be teaching manners and charity to duchesses or minuet steps to rustic swains. Weaving about him, taking the waters, taking snuff, taking Methodism and taking ruinous banknotes from novices, stray and strut and hobble rake-hells, invalids, quacks, hypochondriacs, religious zealots and the cream of British aristocracy, mimicry, poetry and wit. Miss Sitwell is to be commended for her mass of golden excerpts, for cleverness in smelling out cleverness. But the volatility of her talent, that recurring overripe-tangerine quality of her style and the unordered manner of her transitions make one wish that she had not, as she herself has confessed, taken in her early youth such an intense dislike to simplicity. "Bath" is charmingly printed and bound; it is pleasant to look at and to feel. For the ordinary reader as well as for the student of eighteenth-century literature it tells engaging tales.

WORLD POLITICS

THE ONLY WAY OUT, by Emile Burns. *New York: International Publishers. 84 pages. $1.*

The British author of this little book is a highly intelligent and competent economist, who wrote an excellent monograph on "Russia's Productive System." In the present book he treats of the the crisis. He is highly critical of the various remedies proposed by those who would try to save capitalism. He thinks that the only ways in which capitalism can be saved all come down to the increased exploitation of labor. For him, the only way out is proletarian revolution. He argues at length to prove that, in spite of Britain's dependence on foreign supplies, revolution there is feasible, and he sets forth the principal measures which a revolution would have to enforce immediately. The argument is exclusively economic. There is no attempt to prove that the British working masses are now in the mood for revolution.

THE SOVIET'S FIGHT FOR DISARMAMENT. *New York: International Publishers. 44 pages. $.35.*

THE SECRET INTERNATIONAL. *London: Union of Democratic Control. 48 pages. 6 d.*

THE WORLD CONGRESS AGAINST WAR. *New York: American Committee for Struggle Against War. 32 pages. $.05.*

These three pamphlets give some idea of the powder mine on which the world is sitting today: the Soviet government's proposal for ridding the world of the crushing burden of armaments, which was defeated by the proposals of the Powers at Geneva for disarmament by talk; the machinations of the "bloody international" of armament manufacturers for war on earth, good profits to some; and the call for action against war issued by the World Congress Against War at Amsterdam in the summer of 1932.

"The Soviet's Fight for Disarmament," introduced by A. Lunacharsky, gives the speeches of M. Litvinov at the Disarmament

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Conference in Geneva and defines the attitude taken by the Soviet government today on war and peace. "The Secret International" is an attempt to collect the available information on the manufacture of armaments and thus to demonstrate the impossibility of peace without public control of this unholy business. It offers precise and exhaustive information about the armament industry, particularly in England, and reveals the nefarious diplomacy of the manufacturers as practised at Geneva and elsewhere. News of the World Congress Against War was boycotted by the capitalist press at home and abroad. The present pamphlet gives a full report on the Congress, which was attended by 2,196 delegates from twenty-seven countries. It also includes the opening address by Romain Rolland, and the manifesto for individual and mass action against war adopted by the Congress.

Fiction

INCHIN' ALONG, by Welbourn Kelley. *New York: William Morrow and Company. $2.50.*

This novel is a curious mixture of old-fashioned success story and contemporary social protest. Dink Britt, Negro, beginning with nothing but a love of the land, ends in an affluence which many a white dirt-farmer might envy. Dink's mulatto wife is seduced by a white man, white men cheat and rob him, he barely escapes lynching by a white mob—but he climbs onward and upward. Written with sympathy and understanding, Mr. Kelley's book deserves to be read. Its partial failure as a novel is possibly due to his overanxiety to underline his charges against white Southerners. The indictments returned are unquestionably true, but Mr. Kelley errs in believing that Southerners select one Negro for special persecution; one Negro is never so important. The author apparently wanted Dink Britt to be considered as arch-typical of his race, but arch-typical figures do not lend themselves readily to treatment in a novel.

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY, by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. *Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.*

This novel is based on an actual incident, and the mutiny it describes is a matter of historical record. The mission of the "Bounty" was, for its time, scientific: the transportation of the breadfruit trees of the South Sea Islands to the West Indies. There are three excellent characterizations in the novel: those of Lieutenant Bligh, in command of the expedition, whose avarice and cruelty led to the mutiny; of Fletcher Christian, leader of the mutineers; and of Roger Byam, narrator, a student commissioned to prepare a dictionary of the Tahitian languages and a passive actor in the conspiracy. The sensuous impressions of the South Seas, the way in which the rebellion develops, the customs and beliefs of the natives, are described with great care and in a smooth and ingratiating prose. "Mutiny on the Bounty" is in fact an exceptionally well balanced novel, and it is only occasionally that one feels that the authors have sacrificed a possible dramatic intensity by their fidelity to the records of the case.

Contributors

Bray Hammond, a resident of Washington, D. C., is a student of banking reform with several years' experience in banking in rural Iowa, in San Francisco and in New York.

Isidor Schneider, who has published a novel and a volume of verse, is at present completing his second novel.

Jonathan Mitchell, formerly a European correspondent for The New York World, is the author of "Goose Steps to Peace," published last year by Little, Brown and Company.

Herman Simpson, formerly editor of The New York Call, Socialist daily which was discontinued several years ago, contributes book reviews and criticism to various periodicals.

Constance Rourke, biographer and social historian, is the author of "Troupers of the Gold Coast, or the Rise of Lotta Crabtree," "American Humor: A Study of the American Character," and other books.

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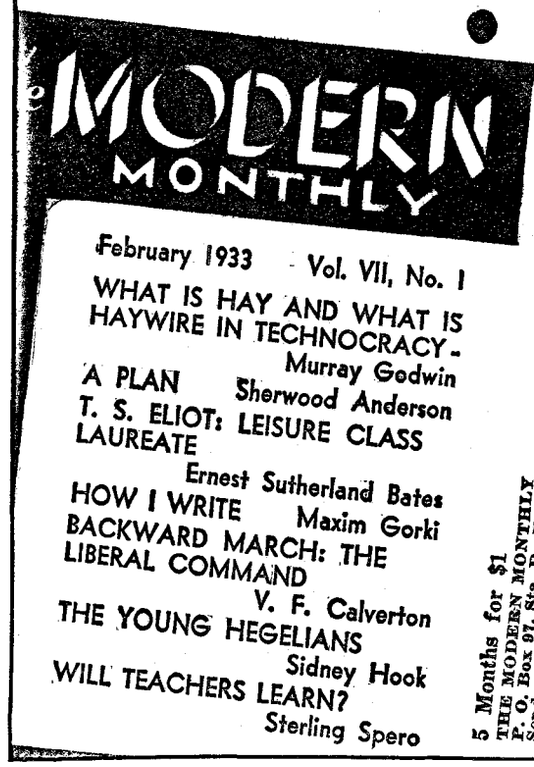
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